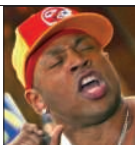


STARS AND STRIPES[®]

**LL Cool J remixes
his image to stay
in hip-hop game**

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**Seabees team
changing face
of Camp Ramadi**

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**Steady Kenneth
in running for
NASCAR repeat**

Racing Stripes, Page 30

Matt Kenneth

Volume 2, No. 146 © EPSS 2004 MIDEAST EDITION

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2004

Rape case dropped against Kobe Bryant

Civil lawsuit still pending; Laker issues apology [Back page](#)

Cheney, Miller call Kerry indecisive



Vice president,
keynote speaker say
Democrat would be
weak in war on terror

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DALLAS MORNING NEWS/KRT

Left: Vice President Dick Cheney unleashed a stinging attack on Democratic presidential nominee Sen. John Kerry, ridiculing him as a politician who has made a career out of changing his mind, on Wednesday at the 2004 Republican National Convention in New York. Right: Keynote speaker U.S. Sen. Zell Miller, D-Ga., sneered at Kerry's proposal that the United States seek consensus before going to war. "Kerry would let Paris decide when America needs defending. I want Bush to decide."

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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

States

Elizabeth Smart kidnapping:

Brian David Mitchell pleaded not guilty in Salt Lake City on Thursday to kidnapping and other charges in the nighttime abduction of Elizabeth Smart.

Mitchell, a street preacher and self-proclaimed prophet, answered "not guilty" six times for each of the charges read to him by the judge. Trial was set for the first week in February.

Mitchell and his wife, Wanda Barzee, are both charged with kidnapping the then-14-year-old from her bedroom in 2002. The girl was allegedly taken into the foothills near the home, sexually assaulted and kept as Mitchell's second wife.

North Dakota gay marriage: North Dakotans gathered enough signatures to force a November vote on a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage, the Secretary of State said Wednesday.

A petition circulated by the North Dakota Family Alliance had 42,093 legal signatures, considerably more than the 25,688 needed to put the idea on the November ballot, Al Jaeger said.

Dog mauling: A 23-year-old Dallas man who unleashed his two pit bull terriers on a neighbor's dog and watchdog they mauled the hound-Dalmatian mix has been sentenced to 10 years in prison and fined \$14,000.

A witness to the September 2003 attack in Pleasant Grove described seeing Carey D. McMillian goad his dogs to attack and ultimately kill the dog named Cisco.

Peterson trial: Prosecutors say Scott Peterson was so worried his wife's body would surface in San Francisco Bay that he visited the area several times after reporting her disappearance. Defense lawyers say he was simply checking on the search efforts.

Prosecutors called numerous police witnesses Wednesday who testified Peterson in the weeks after his pregnant wife Laci was reported missing on Dec. 24, 2002. They described how Peterson visited the Berkley Marina three times — on Jan. 5, Jan. 6 and Jan. 9 — as police scoured the bay for Laci's body.

Tropical Storm Gaston: Tropical Storm Gaston will likely wipe out the \$16 million that Virginia has earmarked for emergency road repairs, the state Department of Transportation said.

VDOT estimates that repairing wrecked roads and bridges will cost \$10 million to \$20 million.

State highway crews continued working Thursday to open about 120 roads that Gaston blocked in central Virginia.

War on terrorism

NATO in Afghanistan: NATO is close to meeting a commitment to bolster its peacekeeping force in Afghanistan with extra troops and aircraft to help provide security during presidential election there in October, U.S. officials said Wednesday.

Officials said a force of around 5,000 would be nearly doubled ahead of the election, as planned, although that will include a battalion of U.S. troops stationed outside Af-



Milosevic trial: The U.N. war crimes tribunal at The Hague imposed two defense lawyers on Slobodan Milosevic in Thursday's effort to end repeated trial delays and because doctors have warned that representing himself threatens the former Yugoslav strongman's health. The tribunal's judges named British attorney Steven Kay and Gillian Higgins, until now court observers ensuring fair proceedings, as Milosevic's defense counsels. They will take over the case from Sept. 7 when his first witnesses are due to be called.

ghastan as an "over the horizon" force ready to intervene if there is trouble.

World

Gibraltar talks: Officials of Spain and Gibraltar rehearsed various issues in dispute at their highest-level meeting in several years, both sides confirmed Thursday.

But spokesmen declined to say whether progress was made on Spain's efforts to recover the British colony at its southern tip, which celebrated 300 years of British rule last month.

The recently elected Socialist government of Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero was irritated by Gibraltar's anniversary celebration.

Clergy sex abuse: Pope John Paul II assured American bishops from New England on Thursday that he supports their efforts to address the damage wrought by clerical sex abuse, acknowledging the scandal "cast a shadow" on the Church.

The pope urged them to encourage their flock to persevere in their faith and asked the bishops to be "strongly supportive" of those priests suffering from "the much-publicized failings" of some of their fellow clergymen.

South Korea nukes: The U.N. nuclear watchdog is investigating a secret uranium-enrichment experiment that South Korean scientists conducted four years ago, U.N. and South Korean officials said Thursday.

The single experiment in early 2000 was revealed in a report South Korea presented last month to the Vienna, Austria-based International Atomic Energy Agency, the Science and Technology Ministry said in a statement.

Afghan fighting: Militants armed with guns and rockets attacked Afghan troops manning a checkpoint in a Taliban stronghold, injuring three soldiers before American forces came to their aid, the U.S. military said Thursday.

In another incident, a rocket ignited a fuel tanker outside an American base near the Pakistani border, an Afghan official said. It was unclear if anyone was hurt.

Chalabi case: An Iraqi judge will decide as soon as Thursday whether to allow the counterfeiting case against former Iraq Governing Council member Ahmad Chalabi to go ahead.

Speaking to reporters later, Chalabi said that the warrant had been downgraded to a court summons and the charges themselves had been dropped. Al-Maliki agreed that the warrant had been reduced but said the charges against Chalabi were still pending Wednesday night.



Chalabi

Business

Halliburton investigation: Halliburton says an internal investigation has found that a consortium it later took over had once considered bribing Nigerian officials to win an energy contract.

Documents found during the investigation of the \$180 million bribery scandal suggested the payments were discussed at least 10 years ago, before Halliburton took the lead of the multinational business group TSKJ.

Stories and photos from wire services

Messages of Support

★ Hello Cous: I hope that when this email reaches you, you and your fellow troops are ok. The family sends you our love and support. We have also shipped a few boxes full of stuff you and your friends might need while fighting this war. Let us

know if you need anything. Remember, we are besides you. We are proud and pray for your safe return. Love, Janice Chavez-Rojas and the entire Chavez family. :)

★ Even if this doesn't make it to B. Gail specifically, I would like to show my support for ALL of our troops overseas right now. My thoughts and prayers are with you daily. Please stay safe and come home to your families. We are all fine at this end, coping day to day. Kathy Sanchez

French envoys plea for release of hostages

Crowds denounce U.S. after bombing in Fallujah kills 17

BY KIM HOUSEGO

The Associated Press

See related story
on Page 9

BAGHDAD — French envoys held crisis talks with Muslim clerics in Iraq on Thursday in a desperate bid to free two kidnapped journalists as a Muslim group released a video purportedly showing the killing of three Turkish hostages and warning foreigners to leave the country.

Representatives of the French Council for the Muslim Faith, which serves as a link to President Jacques Chirac, met with leaders of an influential Sunni clerical organization with alleged ties to insurgents at a Baghdad mosque and urged them to intervene.

"Journalists have never been enemies of any people," said Abdallah Zekri, a French council official. "Free them. But free them whilst we are here. Their families are suffering, their children are in pain."

After the session, the envoys expressed hope the news would be released, but Sheikh Abdul-Sattar Abdul-Jabbar, a member of the clerical Muslim Scholars Association, told The Associated Press that his group does not have any proof that the two hostages are still alive.

"Until now we don't have any contact, whether direct or indirect, with the kidnappers. The one contact is the appeal we made through the media asking for the release," Abdul-Jabbar said.

Nevertheless, Zekri said: "There are much more reasons to trust in a serene, very positive outcome of the situation rather than the contrary."

Ambassador Bernard Bajeot

has received confirmation that the two French journalists are alive and well, a spokesman for the French Embassy in Baghdad said Thursday. The spokesman declined to provide further details.

A militant group calling itself "The Islamic Army of Iraq" said it had kidnapped veteran French reporters Christian Chesnot and Georges Malbrunot and said Islamic headscarves in public schools.

Muslim leaders in France, who have largely opposed the law but denounced the hostage-taking, urged calm as millions of French students opened the school year Thursday with the new law in effect. It was not immediately clear whether any girls defied the law by wearing head scarves.

Although the law bans students from wearing apparel like the Jewish skull cap and large Christian crosses, it clearly targets head scarves, viewed as a sign of rising Muslim fundamentalism and a threat to modern-day France's secular society.

Since the militants released a video Saturday saying they had kidnapped the men, the French government has been working furiously for their release.

French Foreign Minister Michel Barnier was in Qatar on Thursday after high-level talks in Cairo, Egypt and Amman, Jordan. It was not known whether he planned to travel on to Baghdad, where a French special envoy has been dispatched to pursue



Left: Abdallah Zekri, a member of the French Islamic delegation, appeals to kidnappers to release two French hostages at Thursday's news conference in the Um al-Qura mosque in Baghdad. The kidnappers are seeking to overturn France's law banning Islamic head scarves in public schools. Right: A young Muslim student pupil on her headscarf Thursday as she and a friend leave the Faidherbe High School in Lille, France.

back-channel contacts with the hostage-takers.

The meeting Thursday came as pan-Arab television station al-Jazeera reported that it had received a video from a militant group in Iraq linked to al-Qaida that showed three Turkish hostages being killed.

The station said it had a statement claiming responsibility from Tawhid and Jihad, a group linked to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a Jordanian militant held responsible for a string of bombings, kidnappings and other attacks in Iraq.

The video coincided with the discovery by Iraqi police of the bodies of two Turkish citizens and an unidentified man at a rural farm in northern Iraq.

It could not be immediately confirmed whether the bodies belonged to the men in the video. Police said they were only able to identify two of the men, Majeed Mohammed and Yahya Qadir, both of Turkish nationality.

Meanwhile, in the city of Fallujah, angry crowds denounced the United States as they mourned the victims of a U.S. airstrike on an alleged militant safehouse that killed 17 people, including three children, and left a gaping six-yard crater.

"There is only one God, Allah," crowds chanted at the Fallujah General Hospital where the bombing casualties were brought before dawn Thursday. A blanket filled with body parts could be seen lying on the ground, while relatives loaded corpses into the back of a pickup truck for burial.

The U.S. military said it had carried out a precision strike late Wednesday on a safehouse in Fallujah, 40 miles west of Baghdad, used by followers of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a Jordanian militant believed responsible for bombings, kidnappings and other violence in Iraq.

Witnesses said the strike hit a residential house in the southern neighborhood of al-Jubail.

Dr. Ahmed Hamid, of Fallujah General Hospital, said the bodies of nine civilians, including three children, had been brought to the hospital. An Associated Press reporter at the scene saw eight more bodies pulled from the rubble.

On other violence Thursday, two civilians were killed and another 12 injured by crossfire during clashes between insurgents and U.S. forces in Ramadi, west of Baghdad, said police Lt. Nasir Hussein.

Hussein said U.S. forces had taken up positions in a building in the city when they came under attack from rebels and immediately returned fire.

Also Thursday, two people were killed in a roadside bomb explosion about 45 miles southwest of the northern city of Kirkuk, according to police Col. Sarhat Qadir.

In downtown Baghdad, an insurgent threw a hand grenade at a passing police vehicle, injuring one officer and setting the car ablaze.

Sergeant denies prison abuse charges

BY SETH HETTENA

The Associated Press

CAMP PENDLETON, California — A Marine reservist accused of brutalizing prisoners at a makeshift detention camp in Iraq last year took the stand to deny he ever struck a detainee or karate-kicked a man who later died.

"Negative, sir," Sgt. Gary Pittman repeatedly replied when he was asked Wednesday whether he hit, kicked or kneed any detainees at Camp Whitehouse in southern Iraq. Pittman, a 40-year-old federal prison guard in New York in his civilian life, could face two years in military prison if he is convicted of assault and dereliction of duty. Closing arguments were scheduled to begin Thursday.

It is believed to be the first court-martial stemming from the Iraq of a U.S. military prisoner in death.

Speaking calmly in a baritone voice and wearing a uniform full of military ribbons, Pittman described a prison camp run in a professional manner — not the "terror dome" jailhouse where prisoners were

beaten without provocation to create a sense of dominance, as other Marines have testified.

"I never punched an EPW (enemy prisoner of war)," Pittman said. "Even the ones that attacked me. I never punched them. I just used minimum force."

"I never punched an EPW. Even the ones that attacked me. I never punched them. I just used minimum force."

Sgt. Gary Pittman

said that he recalled one situation where he struck the forearm of a detainee who grabbed the Marine's knife.

Pfc. William Roy testified last week that he and Pittman beat 52-year-old detainee Nageen Hatab, who was believed to have taken part in the ambush of a U.S. Army convoy that left 11 soldiers dead and led to the capture of Pfc. Jessica Lynch, among others.

Hatab was found dead on June 6, 2003, two days after his arrival and after lying naked for hours in a dusty yard at the camp. An autopsy by an Army pathologist showed he had six broken ribs and several deep bruises caused him to suffocate.

No one has been charged with killing the detainee because it was ruled in a pretrial hearing that it was unclear which injuries actually killed him.

U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Wednesday, Sept. 1, 976 U.S. service members have died since the beginning of military operations in Iraq in March 2003, according to the Defense Department. Of those, 730 died as a result of hostile action and 246 died of non-hostile causes.

The British military has reported 64 deaths; Italy, 18; Spain, 11; Poland, 10; Bulgaria, six; Ukraine, six; Slovakia, three; Thailand, two; and Denmark, El Salvador, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia and the Netherlands have reported one death each.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 838 U.S. troops have died — 621 as a result of hostile action and 217 of non-hostile causes, according to the military's numbers Wednesday.

The latest deaths reported by the military:

- No new deaths reported.
- The latest identifications reported by the military:
- No new identifications reported.

Iraqi National Council seated amid attacks

New body controls national budget, can veto with two-thirds majority

BY MARIAM FAM
The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — A 100-member transitional assembly intended to serve as a watchdog over the interim Iraqi government until January elections convened for the first time Wednesday at a ceremony in Baghdad marked by mortar attacks and differences among delegates.

The swearing-in ceremony of the National Council was the final step in putting together a caretaker administration after sovereignty was returned to Iraq and interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi took power June 28.

But before the ceremony had even begun, a debate broke out over the wording of the oath of office that was only resolved after a round of haggling.

Members then walked up to the podium in groups of 10 to take the oath, standing against a backdrop of five Iraqi flags and a banner that read: "For a new Iraq."

The assembly "is an important and positive step toward achieving and realizing the dreams of the Iraqi people," said Mohammed al-Ulloum, who headed the event.

The mechanism and timing of choosing the council's president emerged as one of the main sticking points.

After hours of speeches and debates, members finally picked Fuad Masoum, an ethnic Kurd



Kurdish politician Fuad Masoum, the newly elected president of the Iraqi National Council, left, talks to Salma al-Khafaji on Wednesday during the council's first meeting in Baghdad.

who last month headed a national conference of 1,300 Iraqis that chose many of the assembly's members, to lead the body in a last-minute show of hands.

The council has the power to approve the national budget and veto some government decisions with a two-thirds majority vote.

Masoum said the exchanges and loaded discussions were a sign that democracy was taking root in Iraq.

"The discussions were serious and heated ... this is an indication of a democratic atmosphere," Masoum said, adding that the vote was the result "a legal and legiti-

mate process that no one objected to."

Masoum was seen by many delegates both as a competent leader and, as a Kurd, able to provide an ethnic balance within the caretaker administration that also includes Allawi, a Shiite Arab, and interim President Ghazi al-Yawer, a Sunni Arab.

Several prominent political figures failed to show up, including the leaders of the country's two main Kurdish parties, Jalal Talabani and Massoud Barzani, as well as an influential Shiite leader, Abdel Aziz al-Hakim. Masoum said some of those absent were sick, abroad or busy.

The council also set up an 11-member committee to review and revise a draft establishing the assembly's regulations. The council, which will convene again on Saturday, has yet to choose its vice presidents.

As the meeting convened, several mortar rounds exploded near the convention center, inside the heavily guarded Green Zone enclave, wounding one person, the U.S. military said. Two rounds later landed in the Green Zone itself, sending up a plume of gray smoke.

People at the convention center moved away from the center's tall windows.

The August conference that picked 81 of the 100 National Council members was also the target of mortar attacks and at least one exploded near a checkpoint outside on Aug. 17, slightly wounding a U.S. soldier and a civilian security guard. It was also marred by boycotts, threats of walkouts and heated debates.

The remainder of the assembly is made up of former members of the disbanded Governing Council.

Mahdi Army won't disband despite Najaf cease-fire

BY MARIAM FAM
The Associated Press

NAJAF, Iraq — Since his Shiite militia put down its weapons and ended its uprising in Najaf last week, Mahdi Abdul Sahib has slept in a different house every night, hiding from revenge-seeking residents. And yet the 25-year-old says he would fight again.

Aides of rebel cleric Muqtada al-Sadr on Monday called on his Shiite followers across Iraq to observe a unilateral cease-fire and said the cleric was considering forming a political movement.

But despite the Najaf peace deal and Monday's cease-fire call, al-Sadr's militia is still largely intact and armed, and many worry that its fighters, such as Abdul Sahib, are ready to fight another day.

"The situation is still not safe," said Police Lt. Col. Faleh Abdul Hassan, a senior police official in this Shiite southern holy city. "If it weren't for the truce, they would have been destroyed ... It's a golden opportunity for them."

The government worries the militia's existence could lead to unleashing uprisings that would almost certainly fail militarily, but could badly tarnish the government's image and its efforts to



Armed Mahdi Army militiamen sit and wait at a position in Basra, Iraq, Tuesday, despite a unilateral cease-fire.

gain legitimacy in the eyes of many Iraqis.

Anthony Cordesman, a military analyst with the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, said the militia emerged from the conflict more experienced and more hostile to the United States and the interim government.

Cordesman expects "more cycles of violence the moment Sadr feels this is to his advantage." If that moment comes, many militiamen here say, they're ready to fight again.

"Do you think someone who participated [in the fighting] from the start, would stop now?" asked Faleh Abdul Hassan, a Mahdi Army member squatting on a dusty step near al-Sadr's office. "It's either victory or martyrdom."

Sitting cross-legged on his parents' floor, Sahib says he too would fight on. "I'm fighting for my country, my land and my honor."

The latest bout of violence here has claimed hundreds of civilian

lives, scared the revered Imam Ali Shrine compound and left the bodies of many militiamen trapped under piles of concrete and twisted metal.

Though the violence did not drive the Americans out of the country or make life better for the fighters' impoverished families, they don't groan or complain. "We're waiting for the leader's instructions. Whatever he says, we're with him," said Abdul Hassan, who left two wives and eight children in Baghdad and came to fight in Najaf.

Some of al-Sadr's followers say they only kept their personal, light weapons. Many residents here believe the fighters stashed their arms away after the fighting. Police say they have discovered some weapons, such as grenade launchers in buildings previously used by the militants.

Regardless, getting new weapons isn't a problem.

"If you just dig in the ground anywhere in Iraq, you will find weapons," said Abdul Sahib.

As for the fighters, there are always more in the impoverished Shiite slums that have been a fertile recruiting ground for al-Sadr, who has turned disaffection over unemployment and damaged infrastructure into anger toward the Americans.

"If you kill 500, millions more

will join," boasted Halima Hamdan, Abdul Sahib's mother. "It's like they're springing from under the ground."

Abdul Sahib, who said he was one of al-Sadr's bodyguards, was trapped in an area of heavy clashes when word of the peace deal emerged. Kalashnikov in hand, he went to al-Sadr's office and turned in the rifle, he said.

When he went home, some in the neighborhood warned him he might be killed by angry residents he once ruled.

Some here blame the fighters for the city's destruction: whole markets eaten up by fire; buildings shot up; streets littered with body parts, unexploded bombs, fecal trash mixed with sewage.

Abdul Hassan, the police official, said some local tribesmen might want to settle scores with the militiamen who hurt them. But Abu Hussein al-Hamadani, a fighter for al-Sadr, said the militants had won.

"No power in the world made us submit. The Mahdi Army hasn't been disbanded and the weapons haven't been turned over."

The militia's next move will depend on the government, he said. "If they learned from this experience, then there will be peace in Iraq," he said. "If there are provocations, then they will harvest sharp thorns."

Seabees team up to change face of camp

Construction units working to upgrade Camp Ramadi

BY SETH ROBSON

Stars and Stripes

CAMP RAMADI, Iraq — A puff of smoke rises from the ground at Camp Ramadi followed by a loud bang. Mortar and rocket attacks are a common occurrence and a regular reminder to reservists from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion FOURTEEN of the attack that killed five of its members and a soldier on May 2.

But the battalion's tradesmen would rather not dwell on the past and prefer to focus on the work at hand.

At Camp Ramadi, that includes a massive base expansion to provide hard-walled accommodations for up to 1,250 Marines, construction of two large, steel-framed hangars and renovation of a large stone building that used to belong to the Iraqi army.

One of the Seabees, Petty Officer 2nd Class Jerome Kirkland, 40, of Tampa, Fla., said the unit, out of Jacksonville, Fla., is building 1,250 "West Asia Huts" for the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force with the help of the Oklahoma National Guard's 100th Engineers Battalion and Naval Mobile Construction Battalion THREE.

"Three weeks into the job, 25 percent of the huts are ready for move in, 50 percent have the roof on and 75 percent have air conditioners and doors. In two more

weeks, the project will be done," he said.

On Thursday at the site where the huts are sprouting like mushrooms in the dry desert sand, Builders Thomas Villanueva, 40, of Palm Beach, Fla., and Larry Jones, 45, of Deerfield Beach, Fla., were busy cutting plywood with a Skill Saw.

"These openings are too narrow to hang the doors so we are cutting them open and installing the doors," said Villanueva, who added that he and Jones install about 25 doors each day.

Materials for the project, which will improve the quality of life for Marines who would otherwise live in tents, come from all over the world: air conditioners from Egypt; roofing panels from Syria; and plywood from Indonesia. Nothing comes in a single standard measurement, which makes the work challenging, Kirkland said.

The blazing heat of the afternoon does not affect Villanueva, who is used to working outdoors in Florida.

"I do take a lot more water here. Back home it is beer," he said.

Jones, a veteran of 10 years as an active-duty sailor, compared the Iraqi deployment to a long Navy cruise.

"I have been on deployment on a ship but I had never been in a



SETH ROBSON/Stars and Stripes

From left, members of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion THREE — Builder Dennis Prior, 22, of Ilion, N.Y., Petty Officer 3rd Class Travis Brown, 23, of Culver, Ore., and Builder Dustin Krueger, 20, of Grand Junction, Colo., — install roof panels on a hut at Camp Ramadi, Iraq, on Thursday.

desert. It is a bit like being at sea, especially at night when the stars come out," he said.

Nearby, NMCCB-3 Builder Dust in Krueger, 20, of Grand Junction, Colo., was part of a team putting a roof on one of the huts.

Krueger said he has seen a lot of Iraq during his time here. The

builders, from both the reserve and active-duty units have been involved in construction projects all over Al Anbar province, which covers much of western Iraq.

Many buildings in Al Anbar are in bad shape, Krueger said.

"They are just run down. They don't have enough money to support themselves. It would be kind of nice to bring their building style back to them," he said.

The Iraqi buildings reflect the unequal society built by Saddam Hussein's regime, Krueger said.

They include the large, once spectacular palace at the 1st MEF's Ramadi headquarters, known as Blue Diamond, to squallid shacks that many Iraqis live in, he said.

"I wish it was a little more even. You can tell Saddam took all the money and was using it for himself," he said.

Most Iraqi buildings would violate U.S. building codes, Krueger said.

"I don't think they use proper mortar for most buildings. It seems to be coming apart on many of them. They pour concrete pads with wheelbarrows. By the time they get the next wheelbarrow in it looks like it is starting to set. Houses and living

conditions are too close and buildings are on top of each other. They just kind of throw it together."

One way the Seabees are helping to change that is by training young Iraqi builders in Ramadi, Kirkland said.

The Iraqi Construction Apprenticeship Program is designed to give 14- to 18-year-old Iraqis enough building skills to get a job in their local community, he said.

"Our first class had 15 students. The next one had 20 students. Now there are 100 people on a waiting list to get into the classes," he said.

When they graduate, students get a \$70 belt full of tools donated by the U.S. aid organization Spirit of America, he said.

Many Iraqi builders have never had instruction in their trade, Kirkland said.

"When you have someone who doesn't know what they are doing teaching you, quality goes downhill. We are trying to change that by setting a standard construction style," he said.

E-mail Seth Robson at: robsonss@stripes.com

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1st ID troops capture alleged rebel bomber

1st Infantry Division troops last week captured an Iraqi believed to be behind bomb attacks in the Samarra area, according to a press release from coalition authorities.

The soldiers arrested the alleged guerrilla, identified as Weesam Sabah Mamoud al Badri, at 4:40 p.m. Friday near Samarra, the release said. A patrol searched al Badri's car and found a cell phone and cables similar to those used previously to detonate roadside bombs.

The release did not identify the unit that made the arrest. The Samarra sector typically is patrolled by soldiers from Task Force I-26, composed mostly of soldiers from the 1st ID's 2nd Brigade Combat Team.

From staff reports



Pam Baker, standing, gives a class Tuesday at Bamberg Elementary School to teachers on how to use the school's new computer system. The instructors teach kindergarten through second grade. Like most Department of Defense Dependents Schools in Europe, Bamberg Elementary begins classes on Tuesday, and the teaching staff has been working since late August to get ready.

RICK EMERT
Stars and Stripes

DODDS ready to welcome back students

BY RICK EMERT

Stars and Stripes

As summer — one marked by deployments and talk of transformation — draws to an end, about 47,500 DODDS students prepare to return to classes on Tuesday.

"Deployments are a very important piece for us," said Frank O'Gara, spokesman for Department of Defense Dependents Schools-Europe. "Schools play an important part in helping to create stability for children in a community where units are deployed."

Troops from the 1st Infantry Division are currently in Iraq, while deployments of other units to Afghanistan and Iraq during the upcoming school year were recently announced.

At Hohenfels High School, teachers and administrators identify children of deployed soldiers, and monitor them for changes in behavior during the deployment.

"We're always checking with the units to make sure we know who our kids are that are affected by deployments," said Maureen Belanger, the school's principal.

Soldiers from the 94th Engineer Battalion from Hohenfels

will deploy around Christmas time, and a company from the 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment deploys within a week.

"Because we're a small community, we're able to keep a better check on our kids," Belanger said. "We see them every day, and if they are acting different, we are more likely to pick up on it."

While many students are returning to school unsure about their teachers, many teachers are returning unsure about their future, following the announcement of a U.S. military transformation in Europe.

"Our logistics and personnel staff in DODDS-Europe will begin a planning process to efficiently implement any decisions made by the civilian and military leadership," said Diana J. Ohman, director of DODDS-Europe.

"We will coordinate with command officials to determine any future closure dates for affected schools and timelines for steps needed to reach those milestones."

"Our personnel officials will coordinate with teacher union leaders regarding the reassignments and placement of certified staff

DODDS' 2004-05 school year

2004

Tuesday: First day of classes for students
Oct. 11: Columbus Day holiday, no classes
Nov. 4: End of first quarter
Nov. 5: No school for students, teacher work day
Nov. 8: Second quarter begins
Nov. 11: Veterans Day holiday, no classes
Nov. 25-26: Thanksgiving holiday and recess, no classes
Dec. 20-31: Winter recess, Christmas and New Year's holidays, no classes

2005

Jan. 3: Classes resume

Jan. 17: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day holiday, no classes

Jan. 27: End of first semester
Jan. 28: No school for students, teacher work day

Jan. 31: Second semester begins
Feb. 21: Presidents Day holiday, no classes

April 7: End of third quarter
April 8: No school for students, teacher work day

April 11-16: Spring recess
April 18: Fourth quarter begins

May 30: Memorial Day holiday, no classes
June 16: End of second semester

June 17: No school for students, teacher work day

DODDS schools in Geilenkirchen, Germany, Bahrain, the Netherlands and Belgium do not follow this schedule.

and address issues affecting support staff."

Although most students begin classes on Tuesday, teachers and administrators have been working since late August getting the schools ready. In addition, some schools with a large number of international students follow a different schedule and began classes on Aug. 23.

Through the uncertainty, DODDS officials say the school

stays remain focused on improving education and facilities for their students.

Students entering the ninth grade this year — the Class of 2008 — will be required to earn 26 units of credit to graduate from DODDS schools. Those graduating through 2007 need 24.

Also, the schools are fully implementing language arts and reading curriculum for grades kindergarten through six, and lan-

guage arts in grades seven to 12.

The first phase of implementing the new curriculum began in the 2002-2003 school year.

DODDS building officials had a busy summer, with \$45.6 million in major construction, renovations and force protection improvements to schools in Europe, O'Gara said.

SEE SCHOOL ON PAGE 7

Changes include AP grading procedure, dress code

BY RICK EMERT

Stars and Stripes

For some students in DODDS-Europe, there will be a lot of new things in the new school year.

Department of Defense Dependents Schools students taking advanced placement classes will see changes in the way their grades are tallied. Students at Bamberg Elementary School, Germany, will start the year with a new dress code. And students at Bamberg and elsewhere will join others in a new way of scheduling classes.

Under advanced placement procedures implemented in the spring, stu-

Bamberg Elementary starts the year with a new dress code, where shirts or blouses must be red, white or blue or a pattern with a combination of those colors.

dents taking AP classes will get weighted grades only if they take the AP exam. DODDS foots the bill for the exams, ac-

cording to Frank O'Gara, DODDS-Europe spokesman.

This year, students entering the DODDS system from other schools must have already taken the tests to get the weighted credit.

In Bamberg, high school students will get a new block schedule that increases class length from 50 minutes to 90 minutes. Many schools in the Bavaria District and elsewhere have already adopted block schedules.

The program has been successful at Würzburg High School where students have an "A" day with four classes and a "B" day with three classes and a tutorial block, said Ward Seely, the Würzburg principal.

"It's especially good for lab classes and classes like music and drama," Seely said. "The students are comfortable with it, because they aren't meeting in the exact same place at the same time every single day."

The tutorial block gives students the chance to meet with the teacher of a class they may be having problems in and get extra help, he said.

Bamberg Elementary starts the year with a new dress code, where shirts or blouses must be red, white or blue or a pattern with a combination of those colors. No logos or writing is allowed, nor are blue jeans.

SEE DRESS CODE ON PAGE 7

Navy to resume search for sub

The Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — The search for the Navy's first submarine off the North Carolina coast will continue even though the first sweep was shortened by bad weather.

Researchers looking for the USS Alligator, a Civil War-era vessel that sank in a storm in 1863, scrapped the last two days of the 10-day project over the weekend due to tropical storms Gaston and Hermine.

A 108-foot ship operated by the Office of Naval Research surveyed the ocean floor about 20 miles off Ocracoke Island for the Alligator, which sank in the area during a storm as it was being pulled south to Charleston, S.C.

The 47-foot Alligator was supposed to submerge and send out a diver to attach explosives to ships or harbor obstructions. But the vessel had to abort its first mission in Virginia rivers because the water was too shallow.

The tow ship cut loose the Alligator in the storm.

School: Upgrades greet students

SCHOOL, FROM PAGE 6

The major projects included an elementary school in Rota, Spain; a building for Lakenheath Middle School at RAF Feltwell, England; a gymnasium for Rota Middle School; and new classrooms for full-day kindergarten in several communities.

In addition, renovations were made to:

■ Eleven classrooms at Ramstein Elementary School, Germany.

■ Dining facility at Lakenheath Elementary School, England.

■ Bathrooms at London Central dormitory.

■ A new roof at RAF Alconbury High School, England.

■ The mechanical and electrical systems at Ankara's elementary and high school in Turkey.

About \$3.1 million was spent on force-protection improvements for facilities and buses, which carry about 27,000 students daily, O'Gara said.

"We take every possible precaution with school buses to make sure the kids are safe and secure," he said.

This year, there are 900 routes and 6,600 separate stops for the buses contracted to make the runs in Belgium, Germany, Iceland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, the United Kingdom, Turkey and Bahrain. Each route typically involves a 25-45 minute drive, O'Gara said.

E-mail Rick Emert at: emert@mail.estripes.osd.mil



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE U.S. ARMY

Kimberly Robinson shops for new school clothes for her daughter, Kaylah, 6, at the Bamberg Post Exchange in Germany. Bamberg schools have adopted a school dress code for its students.

Dress code: Parents OK with limits on clothes

DRESS CODE, FROM PAGE 6

"Strong parent support led to the implementation of the dress code," said Cheryl Boujinda, a Bamberg School Advisory Committee member. Polls were mailed to all families with school-age children, and those who didn't respond were called at home and queried, she said.

"Students will be able to focus on academics instead of competing in a fashion show," Boujinda said.

"There will be less competition. There's no difference really between a blue or white polo shirt, but there's a lot of difference between designer clothing and cheaper brands. It takes some of the pressure off the parents."

A handful of other schools already have dress codes, which are up to the discretion of local schools and parent advisory groups, according to DODDS.

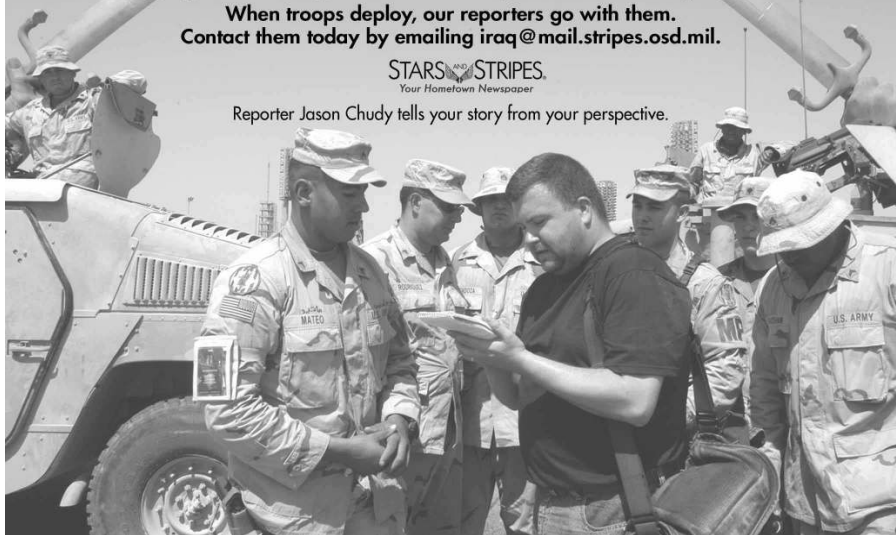
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Stormy weather hurts AFN signal

Stars and Stripes

Inclement weather over the East Coast of the United States has wreaked havoc for American Forces Network viewers in Europe and the Middle East, network officials said Thursday.

In recent days, television viewers have received distorted images, something officials attribute to Mother Nature. Bad weather can weaken the reception, especially given that signals reaching Europe rely on multiple satellite paths, Jose Toledo, AFN's chief engineer, said in a news release.

AFN programming originates from California, where the signal is sent to a satellite over the United States and then downlinked to New Jersey, he said.

That same signal is then sent to a satellite positioned over the

Atlantic Ocean and received at the AFN downlink facility located in Ussing, Germany. From there, the program signal is delivered to AFN Headquarters in Frankfurt.

Network technicians informed their counterparts in New Jersey of the problem, but were told it was due to bad weather, officials said.

Technicians have increased the signal output to boost the quality of the images, but due to a high barometric pressure, there has been no noticeable improvement, Toledo said.

In addition, there have been problems with AFN radio broadcasts.

Air Force 2nd Lt. Nicole M. Dubnicay, an AFN-Europe spokeswoman, said attempts are being made to fix the problems.

DOD plans to restaff its hospitals with civilians

Uniformed personnel will be moved to jobs more directly tied to war

BY CHRISTOPHER LEE

The Washington Post

The Defense Department plans to transfer thousands of uniformed health care personnel out of their positions in military medical facilities over the next few years and replace them with civilian workers or contractors.

The initiative is part of a larger Pentagon effort to reassign military members to jobs that are more directly tied to war-fighting and national security, leaving the tasks they have been performing to civil servants or private contractors, or eliminating the positions.

The plan could bring important changes in the way the Defense Health Program provides medical and dental care to 8.9 million active members of the military, their dependents and military retirees. The changes are expected to affect thousands of doctors, dentists, nurses, administrators

and ancillary staff employed in a network of 75 military hospitals and 461 military clinics.

What will not change, officials contend, is the quality and level of care provided in a system that employs 40,648 civilians and 91,917 military members, with a current budget of \$17.3 billion.

Pentagon officials declined to discuss most details of the plan, saying it is part of the department's budget-development process. The administration has requested \$17.6 billion for the department's health program this year, including \$33.8 million to fund the conversion of positions held by military personnel to civilian workers or private contractors.

The rationale behind the plan is that only certain jobs must be performed by a person in uniform, officials said. Others can be done by civilian or contract workers — or could be eliminated.

"Generally speaking, should a position be converted from military to civilian, the military personnel would be reassigned to another position in military medicine that requires a military person with that expertise," Marianne Coates, a Defense spokeswoman, said in an e-mail response to questions. Navy Lt. Cmdr. Tim Weber, division director for manpower operations at the Navy's Bureau of Medicine, elaborated on how the planned changes are expected to play out in one branch of the military's medical facilities.

Under the plan, a uniformed pediatrician at, say, Naval Hospital Jacksonville in Jacksonville, Fla., might be replaced by a civilian doctor or private contractor, Weber said. The same might be true of a Navy nurse or uniformed administrator who would

at the San Diego Naval Medical Center.

"They will continue in their military careers."

Lt. Cmdr. Tim Weber
a division director at the Navy's Bureau of Medicine, on an affected military medical staff

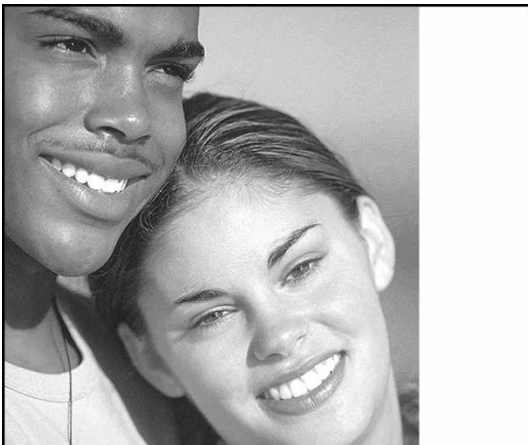
As many as 5,415 jobs now held by uniformed Navy members will be switched to contractors or civilians by fiscal 2011, including 1,772 positions over the fiscal year that begins Oct. 1, he said.

sonnel will transfer to a "military-essential" position when their rotation in their current post ends.

"They will continue in their military careers," Weber said. "We are not involuntarily reducing our numbers. ... Navy medicine globally is slightly understaffed at the moment."

Weber said the plan is expected to save money in the long run by reducing the number of uniformed military health care workers, which in turn will reduce the Navy's retirement and infrastructure obligations.

Weber said the plan will not affect the 10,500 doctors, nurses and health care support staff members who travel with the Navy and Marines every day. Nor will it change the jobs of the 24,000 health care workers at Navy hospitals in the United States who are part of a readiness group that can be deployed on short notice, he said.



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Pentagon proposes task force to avoid hostilities

Stars and Stripes

The Pentagon's Defense Science Board, in a briefing to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, proposed the creation of an interagency task force to plan and help implement the transition to and from potential hostilities, the weekly Inside the Pentagon reported Thursday.

The new approach is aimed at giving new structure to a process — seen most recently in Iraq — in which postconflict plans and funding have largely been cobbled together in an ad hoc fashion, delaying stability and reconstruction, experts say.

Under the proposal, the task forces would bring together about 250 regional and functional experts from the National Security Council staff, intelligence community, State Department, Pentagon, Justice Department and other agencies to identify a small

number of possible crisis areas, Inside the Pentagon reported.

Then the task forces would plan in detail how the government would handle a period before and during a crisis — presumably with diplomacy in a leading role, aimed at avoiding hostilities. The interagency groups would go on to craft details of the use of force and the postcombat phases of stability and reconstruction, participants in the study told the paper.

Initial reaction to the DSB recommendations among Rumsfeld and his top civilian and military deputies was positive, sources close to the panel were reported as saying.

The study and its recommendations were strongly influenced by the Bush administration's failure to coordinate adequate postwar plans for the stability and reconstruction of Iraq, despite more than a year of combat planning, DSB participants told the paper.

IN THE WORLD

Hostages still captive in Russian school

More than two dozen people released Thursday

By MIKE ECKEL
The Associated Press

BESLAN, Russia — Camouflaged security agents carried babies to safety after militants holding hundreds of hostages at a school released at least 26 women and children Thursday, and officials expressed hope that negotiations would bring more progress in the standoff in southern Russia.

But a crowd of hostages' relatives keeping vigil outside the school was shaken when a pair of explosions went off just ahead of the release. Officials said militants fired rocket-propelled grenades at two cars that got too close to the school. Officials said neither car was hit, but reporters said they saw a gutted car that apparently had been hit, about 100 yards from the school.

The developments came after a night of telephone negotiations between Russian authorities and the militants, who stormed the school Wednesday, rounding up hundreds of children and adults into a gym and threatening to blow up the building if police launch an assault.

Local official Lev Dzugayev said 26 women and children of various ages were released and called their freedom "the first success," expressing hope for further progress in negotiations.

Dzugayev also said his earlier statement that 354 hostages were seized might have been too low, and many in the anxious crowds in Beslan said they believed the number was much higher. "Putin: at least 800 people are being held hostage," read a sign held up for television cameras.

Dzugayev has said between 15 and 24 militants were thought to be in the school, which had students from grades one to 11. Also taken hostage in the standoff were some parents who were bringing their older children to school while carrying with them babies or preschoolers.

The hostage-taking in Beslan, a town of about 30,000 in the southern region of North Ossetia, appeared to be the latest in a string of attacks connected to the war in nearby Chechnya.

Security forces surrounded the building,



A member of the Russian military carries a baby after some women and children were released by militants holding hostages in a school in Beslan, North Ossetia, Russia.

and militants perched a sniper on an upper floor. Since the seizure, militants have refused offers to deliver food and water to the school and are demanding the release of fighters detained over a series of attacks on police facilities in the nearby republic of Ingushetia.

Law enforcement sources in North Ossetia and Ingushetia, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the hostage takers were believed to include Chechens, Ingush, Russians and at least one North Ossetian.

In his first public comment on the standoff, President Vladimir Putin pledged to do everything possible to save the hostages' lives. "We understand these acts are not

only against private citizens of Russia but against Russia as a whole," he said. "What is happening in North Ossetia is horrible."

Officials at the crisis headquarters said the releases came after mediation by Russian Aushiev, an Afghan war veteran and former president of the neighboring Ingushetia region who is a respected figure in Russia's troubled North Caucasus region.

As Dzugayev announced some of the releases, a crowd of relatives swarmed around him, trying to find out if their loved ones were among those freed.

The attackers demanded — and received — talks with a prominent pedi-

atrician, Leonid Roshal, who aided hostages during the deadly seizure of a Moscow theater in 2002.

After contacts with the militants, Roshal said late Thursday that the captors had repeated their rejection of food, water and medicine for the hostages. He warned that an unsuccessful outcome of the hostage crisis "would mean war" in the region, and appealed to Chechens, Ingush and Ossetians to avoid bloodshed.

Valery Andreyev, the Federal Security Service's chief in North Ossetia, seemed to rule out the immediate use of force against the hostage-takers.

"There is no alternative to dialogue," the ITAR-Tass news agency quoted him as saying. "One should expect long and tense negotiations."

Sporadic gunfire chattered in the area through the night, keeping the crowds of relatives around the school on edge.

The drama at the school came with memories still sharp from the deadly end to last major hostage-taking blamed on Chechens. In 2002, Chechen militants seized a Moscow theater, holding hundreds inside. That standoff ended when police pumped an unidentified knockout gas into the building — but the gas was responsible for almost all of the 129 hostage deaths.

Gennady Gudkov, a retired Federal Security Service colonel, said there is little chance that authorities will resort to a knockout gas this time — particularly since medical experts said it tended to have a stronger effect on children.

The militants' storming of the school came a day after a suspected Chechen suicide bomber blew herself up outside a Moscow subway station, killing nine people, and just over a week after 90 people died in a plant explosion that has been linked to a bomb attack by bombers also linked to Chechnya.

The recent bloodshed is a blow to Putin, who pledged five years ago to crush Chechnya's rebels but instead has seen the insurgents increasingly strike civilian targets beyond the republic's borders.

France's Islamic head scarf ban survives first day of school

By ELAINE GANLEY
The Associated Press

PARIS — France's new law banning Islamic head scarves in schools — a bold effort to rein in Muslim fundamentalism — apparently passed its first test Thursday, the start of the school year.

There were no major incidents and only a few known cases of girls refusing to comply.

A hostage crisis in Iraq raised the stakes, with Islamic radicals holding two French journalists demanding the ban be scrapped.

Mohammed Bechari, a vice president of the French Council for the Muslim Faith, urged calm.

"The hostage-takers are just waiting for a provocation," Bechari told Le Figaro newspaper before departing for Iraq with a delegation of French Muslim leaders to help in the hostage crisis.

"We must be responsible."

There appeared to be widespread compliance with the law. Two high school girls in the Strasbourg region refused to take off their scarves and returned home, education officials said.

In other cases in Strasbourg, officials tried to persuade "several veiled young girls" to comply. The law calls for dialogue in such cases.

In Paris, an incident was "resolved in a few hours," according to education officials. In other cases around France, girls took off head coverings before entering school.

The law has been among the most divisive issue in recent times in France.

It forbids conspicuous religious

signs or apparel in public schools, including Jewish skull caps and large Christian crosses.

However, it is aimed at Islamic head scarves and meant to counter a rise in Muslim fundamentalism reportedly taking root in schools.

Authorities also want to bolster France's much cherished principle of secularism, seen as a way to guarantee peaceful coexistence among various religions and communities.

France's Muslim population is an estimated 5 million, the largest in Western Europe.

Students at Henri Wallon said they were given a handout spelling out the law and were instructed to read it and be able to explain it.

Even girls who don't wear head scarves questioned the law.

Myriam Benalouache, 15, waiting to enter the Jacques Brel High School in La Courmeuve, a heavily immigrant suburb north of Paris, said she thinks it's a mistake to ask girls to remove their scarves.

"For Muslim girls, it's like removing one's clothes," she said.

Messages of Support

★ To my husband J. T. Bishop I just want you to know that I am thinking of you each and every day. I love and miss you very much, and respect what you are doing for our country and the world. Jackson and I are awaiting your return and we know that you will be safe and home with us soon. Please take care and we hope to see you soon. From your proud Marine wife — Jessie Bishop

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Malaysian politician freed from prison

Anwar's sodomy conviction overturned by top court after six years

BY SEAN YOONG
The Associated Press

PUTRAJAYA, Malaysia — Jailed former Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim left court a free man after Malaysia's top court overturned his sodomy conviction on Thursday — six years to the day after his removal from office triggered the country's worst political crisis.

A Federal Court panel ruled 2-1 to reverse the conviction against Anwar, who was once considered the heir apparent of his mentor-turned-enemy, then Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad. But Mahathir fired him, touching off widespread political turmoil.

Mahathir's successor, Prime Minister Ahmad Abdullah Badawi, had been expected to take

a softer line toward Anwar and put the divisive issue behind Malaysia after he took office last year.

Anwar told reporters that his convictions had been "highly politically motivated" by the ruling. He rejected accusations that he had orchestrated a judicial conspiracy to frame Anwar.

"I bear no malice against him. Let him retire," Anwar said. "I feel vindicated. This is all about justice."

But the combative Mahathir was unrepentant, telling reporters that he was "mildly surprised" by the ruling. He rejected accusations that he had orchestrated a judicial conspiracy to frame Anwar.

"I'm not going to lose any sleep," Mahathir said. "I still believe that he's guilty. My con-

science is clear."

Anwar is expected to travel to Germany for surgery to treat a back injury, partly blamed on a beating by Malaysia's

then police chief following his arrest in 1998 after leading a massive anti-Mahathir demonstration.

Judge Abdul Hamid Mohamad read out the verdict over 1½ hours. As it became apparent that Anwar, 57, would be free, the prisoner — wearing a neck brace and confined to a wheelchair — ex-

changed excited glances with family members and gave a thumbs-up sign.

"We are not prepared to uphold the conviction," Abdul Hamid said.

"We therefore allow this appeal and set aside the conviction and the sentence."

Abdul Hamid said the conviction was flawed because the chief prosecution witness, Azizan Abubakar, had repeatedly changed the dates that he claimed Anwar had had sex with him. Azizan had been the driver for Anwar's wife.

Anwar credited Abdullah for not interfering with the judiciary.

"You've got to recognize the fact that his predecessor wouldn't have made this judgment possible," Anwar said.

Anwar has long claimed that the convictions were rigged to prevent him from challenging Mahathir for power.

"Finally, the courts have found courage which they never had under the Mahathir regime," said observer Param Cumaraswamy, vice president of the Geneva-based International Commission of Jurists.

Abdullah told a news conference that he expected jubilant Anwar supporters to obey the law but that he doubted Anwar's release would affect political stability.

Anwar had been jailed since 1998 and had been expected to be in prison for another five years. A separate six-year corruption sentence ran out last year after it was reduced for good behavior.

Man squirts milk from eye to claim new world record

BY JAMES C. HELICKE
The Associated Press

ISTANBUL, Turkey — Ilker Yilmaz might just hold one of the world's most bizarre world records.

The Turkish construction worker on Wednesday poured milk into his hand, loudly asserted it up his nose and squirted it 9.223 feet out of his left eye in a way that hopes will be recognized as a new world record.

"I'm happy and proud that I can get Turkey in the record book even if it's for milk squirting," said the 28-year-old. He says he is among only a handful of people around the world who can perform the feat because of an anomaly in his tear gland.

The Web site for Guinness World Records says Canadian Mike Morsal of Vancouver, British Columbia, set the existing record, of 8.745 feet in France in 2001.

In an e-mail, Guinness World Records said it had no official representative present to witness Yilmaz's feat and was waiting for documents from organizers of Wednesday's event to prove the record.

"It is really good to hear that provisionally a new record may have been set," Sam Knights, a Guinness representative, said in an e-mail. "We welcome new record breakers and look forward to receiving the evidence ... and then we can verify this new record attempt."

Yilmaz said he has known for years that he could squirt liquids out of his eye, but only three years ago found out that there was a record for squirting milk.

"I learned by chance that I had such a talent. When I was swimming with friends, I noticed water squirting out of my eye," he said. "When I saw [a previous Guinness] attempt on TV, I thought, maybe I could do that, too."

Mahir Kendusim, an Istanbul-based eye doctor,



Ilker Yilmaz snorts milk up his nose and squirts it out of his eye in a bid Wednesday to set a new world record in Istanbul, Turkey. Yilmaz squirted the milk 9.223 feet, surpassing the existing world record of 8.745 feet. A Guinness World Records representative said the record must still be verified.

said a cavity links the lower eyelid to the nasal cavity, but added that he has never heard of anyone who was able to carry out a feat such as Yilmaz's.

Two years ago, Yilmaz said he broke an earlier record, but Guinness did not recognize it because the witnesses present did not fulfill its guidelines.

On Wednesday, an imam, or Muslim prayer leader, was among witnesses watching as Yilmaz sucked in the milk, held back his left eyelid with his finger and squirted away. Yilmaz succeeded on his third attempt. The record attempt was sponsored by Kay Sut, a Turkish milk company.

U.S., Sudan support U.N.'s force demand

BY EDITH M. LEDERER
The Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS — U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan's demand for an expanded international force in Sudan's Darfur region got immediate support from the United States — and an unexpected positive reaction from the Sudanese government.

Sudan's U.N. Ambassador Elfatih Mohamed Bahr told reporters late Wednesday that the government has no objection to increasing the African Union force monitoring an April cease-fire that has largely been ignored. It currently has about 80 military observers, protected by just over 300 soldiers.

The secretary-general is speaking about the monitoring, and increasing the forces for the monitoring. That's fine with us," he said. "Whether it is 300 or 3,000, if it helps, that's fine."

But Erwa said Sudan would oppose an international force with another mandate, for example to disarm militias or other groups because that could lead to military confrontations.

Annan did not say how large a force he wanted, but U.N. diplomats said a U.N. plan presented to the African Union called for about 3,000 peacekeepers. The 53-nation African organization, led by Nigeria, is expected to make a recommendation in the coming days, diplomats said.

speaking on condition of anonymity.

U.S. Ambassador John Danforth said Washington's main concern is to get outsiders into Darfur soon.

"Call them monitors," he said. "The issue is getting a substantial number of people in there, and getting in there as quickly as possible ... (with) people who have credibility in the eyes of the people of Darfur."

The secretary-general urged the speedy deployment of an expanded force in a report to the U.N. Security Council Wednesday which said Sudan's government has not stopped attacks on "terrorized and traumatized" civilians in Darfur or disarmed marauding militias.

His top envoy to Sudan, Jan Pronk, was scheduled to brief the council on the report Thursday morning at a public meeting and later answer questions from the 15 members at a closed-door session.

Danforth, a former senator from Missouri who recently was the top U.S. envoy to Sudan, criticized the Sudanese government for failing to meet its obligations under a Security Council resolution adopted on July 30. That document gave Sudan 30 days to demonstrate it was curbing nomadic Arab tribes accused of killing thousands in attacks on African farm villages and improving security and access for aid groups.

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IN THE STATES

Cheney knocks Kerry's record, lauds Bush



Vice President Dick Cheney addresses the delegates at the Republican National Convention on Wednesday in New York. Cheney portrayed his boss as a decisive commander in chief ready for another term.

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — As President Bush prepared to accept the Republican nomination for a second term, Vice President Dick Cheney portrayed his boss as a decisive commander in chief. "He doesn't waffle, he doesn't agonize," Cheney said Thursday.

"That's exactly what we need in a president. We don't need indecision or confusion," Cheney said at a breakfast with Ohio delegates on the concluding day of the Republican National Convention.

Bush was attending a worship service at a Park Avenue church and then making a brief visit to the Madison Square Garden convention site for a microphone and podium check ahead of his prime-time speech. Meanwhile, about 100 anti-Bush demonstrators staged a quick, loud and well-organized protest at Grand Central Terminal during Thursday's rush hour, unfurling banners and colorful balloons that called on the president to do more in the fight against AIDS.

Nineteen people were arrested after they refused police orders to leave. Cheney, who unleashed a withering attack on Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry in his speech to the convention Wednesday night, cited Ohio's importance in deciding the election and why he believes Bush is the right person to be president.

"When he has to make a decision, he doesn't waffle, he doesn't agonize over it,"

Miller zings Democrat candidate in lively speech

Cheney told the Ohio gathering.

No Republican has ever won the presidency without winning Ohio. Bush carried the state narrowly in 2000 but polls show it to be a dead heat this year.

Rep. Port Manum, R-Ohio, a close friend of the Bush family, will play the part of Democratic vice presidential candidate John Edwards in Cheney's preparation for this fall's vice presidential debate.

Bush planned to use his convention address to encourage Americans to keep him on the job and to offer himself as a resolute wartime commander in chief with ambitious plans for a second term.

Bush, who arrived in this fortified convention city Wednesday night at the end of a three-day, six-state campaign dash, will boast of his record and sketch the domestic agenda he would pursue if re-elected, a goal that eluded his father. He'll also talk about how the terrorist attacks altered him and the world.

The speech also will offer an agenda that includes initiatives to simplify the tax code

and help people buy homes, start businesses, hone job skills and set up tax-free retirement and health care accounts, aides said.

Ahead of Bush's acceptance address, Cheney and convention keynoter Sen. Zell Miller, D-Ga., unleashed a scathing barrage of attacks on Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry.

Miller said, "George Bush wants to grab terrorists by the throat and not let them go to get a better grip. From John Kerry, they get a 'yes-no-maybe' bowl of mush that can only encourage our enemies and confuse our friends."

Cheering delegates waved signs saying "We love Zell" and "It's Zell Miller Time" when Miller said, "No pair has been more wrong, more loudly, more often than the two senators from Massachusetts, Ted Kennedy and John Kerry."

Cheney told GOP delegates during his prime-time address Wednesday night, "On Iraq, Sen. Kerry has disagreed with many of his fellow Democrats. But Sen. Kerry's liveliest disagreement is with himself. His back and forth reflects a habit of indecision, and sends a message of confusion. Senator Kerry says he sees two Americas. It makes the whole thing mutual. America sees two John Kerrys."

Delegates roared their approval of Cheney's backslide against Kerry, some joining in the taunts by shouting "flip flopper, flip flopper" and waving flip-flop sandals in the air.



Miller

Stars and Stripes

Messages of Support

★ THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING YOU ARE DOING FOR THE SAKE OF FREEDOM. YOUR MISSION IS THE MOST HONORABLE OF ALL JOBS AMERICA OFFERS HER CITIZENS. ALWAYS HOLD YOUR HEAD UP AND KNOW THAT YOU DID ALL YOU COULD DO FOR YOUR COUNTRY—FOR ME AND EVERY AMERICAN—EVEN THE ONES WHO DO NOT DESERVE TO ENJOY THE ONE THING THAT HAS THE HIGHEST PRICE TAG—FREEDOM!!!!

★ Robert, We are praying for your safe return and know that THE LORD is watching over you. God bless you, Terry & Sharon

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Franks to back Bush

Knight Ridder/Tribune

NEW YORK — Retired Gen. Tommy Franks, who commanded U.S. forces in Afghanistan and Iraq, will endorse President Bush for his "proven leadership in a time of crisis" in a speech Thursday at the Republican National Convention.

In an interview Wednesday, Franks said Democrat John Kerry was "fully qualified" to be commander in chief and "would be a good president at another place in our history."

But the former commander of Central Command, who retired last summer after the invasion of Iraq, said he'd watched Bush's "character, consistency and persistence" up close and decided to back him publicly.

"The only question was would I support him in the quietude of the polling booth or would I become more vocal," said Franks, a last-minute addition to the convention schedule. "I'm doing this because I'm positive about Bush, not negative about the other guy."

Franks was disdainful of the "hyper-polarity" he sees in politics and "the hyperbole that exists on both sides, whether from the Swift Boat guys or Michael Moore," referring to the veterans who oppose Kerry and the filmmaker who derides Bush.

Franks' speech could help Bush on one of his major vulnerabilities — the decision-making on Iraq. Polls show that roughly half the public now views Bush's decision to invade Iraq a mistake.

Stars and Stripes

Messages of Support

★ We support you in all that you do and keep you in our daily prayers. May God be with you each day, guide and protect you. Kyle & Hattie, Green Valley, AZ

★ I hope you are safe and well. How frightening it must be to be involved in this war. But I believe, as do the majority of Americans, that you and all the servicemen and women are heroes and are engaged in a noble endeavor — trying to ensure the freedom of Americans and all of their allies. God Bless you and your fellow servicemen and women and may this war end soon and you all return home safe and sound. Love, Great-Aunt Penny Yungling

★ I just wanted to let you know that you are doing a great job. We are all behind you here at home. We miss you and pray for you hourly. Thank you for serving. Sarah Alquist

Honoring those who answered

America's Call to Action

Every service member's commitment to our nation's defense is invaluable.

During the month of September, DefendAmerica.mil and the Pentagon Channel will spotlight some of the many men and women in uniform who joined the armed forces in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attack on the United States.

If you responded to the attack by joining the military and would like us to consider your story for publication, please fill out the form found at:

www.defendamerica.mil/forms/CallAction.html

Dems say RNC's message lacking

BY WILL LESTER
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Democrats said Thursday the Republican convention is offering an angry vision to America that won't play well in the closing weeks of the presidential campaign.

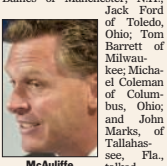
Delegates took this kind of stuff, but when this settles down and we get past Labor Day, I think this convention will prove to be a big mistake," said Philadelphia Mayor John Street, who was among Democrats recruited to counter the GOP message in New York. "People out in the country's neighborhoods want to know what you have to offer us."

Street said the attacks on Democratic nominee John Kerry's Vietnam War record that have given Bush traction in the polls don't carry over into the latter stages of the campaign.

"People were paying attention to the attacks over the last five weeks, but I think it was a little too early," Street said. "What are they going to do during the month of October when people are really paying attention?"

Street was one of a half-dozen mayors who joined Democratic

Chairman Terry McAuliffe and Iowa Gov. Tom Vilsack for a briefing a half-dozen blocks south of the GOP convention. The mayors, including Robert Baines of Manchester, N.H.,



McAuliffe

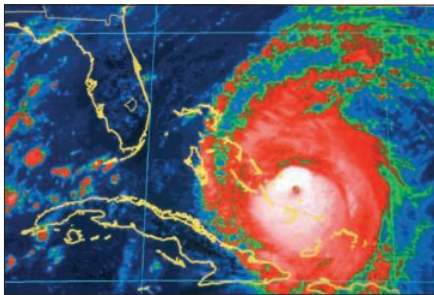
Jack Ford of Toledo, Ohio; Tom Barrett of Milwaukee; Michael Coleman of Columbus, Ohio; and John Marks, of Tallahassee, Fla., talked

about how

Bush administration policies are hurting cities by cutting federal funding for housing and policing.

"We're protecting Baghdad, but we can't protect people in our own housing projects," Trenton, N.J., Mayor Douglas Palmer said.

Bush campaign spokesman Steve Schmidt rejected claims the convention has an angry tone. He said people are interested in hearing Republicans contrast the president's clear plans with Kerry's "vacillation and indecisiveness."



A NOAA infrared satellite image of Hurricane Frances is seen over the Bahamas on Wednesday at 11:15 a.m. EDT. Forecasters warned the core of the Category 4 storm, with 145 mph winds, was due along Florida's Atlantic coast late Friday or early Saturday. More than one million people have been told to evacuate.

AP

Floridians prep for Frances

The Associated Press

PORT ST. LUCIE, Fla. — More than a million people threatened by Hurricane Frances were told to clear out Thursday, and residents scrambled to board up homes and stock up on water ahead of what could be Florida's mightiest storm in a decade.

A hurricane warning covered much of the state's eastern coast — about 300 miles from Florida City, near the state's southern tip, to Flagler Beach, north of Daytona Beach.

The warning meant hurricane-force winds of at least 74 mph were likely by midmorning Friday — three weeks after Hurricane Charley, another Category 4 storm, raked the state's western coast, killing 27 people.

Most of the residents who were told to leave were in South Florida — 300,000 in Palm Beach County, 250,000 in Broward County and 320,000 in Miami-Dade County.

States of emergency were declared in Florida and Georgia.

With its 145 mph winds, Frances is as strong as Hurricane

Charley, and it's twice the size, said Stephen Baig, a forecaster at the National Hurricane Center in Miami. Frances is also about twice the size of 1992's Hurricane Andrew, the Category 5 storm that destroyed much of southern Miami-Dade County.

Supermarkets along Florida's Atlantic coast were stripped of bottled water and canned goods, and long lines of customers waited at home supply stores Thursday hoping for a chance to buy plywood or generators.

Demand for gas was so great some stations were pumped dry.

GOP sets convention to big musical score

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — The Republican convention is being run not only by a script, but by a score.

Like the Democrats before them, Republicans have set their politics to music, a relentlessly upbeat symphony of familiar campaign songs meant to keep the hall pulsing with energy, viewers awake and gaps in the speechless filled with sounds and images of a party trying to appeal to all tastes, ethnic groups and voting ages.

There's gospel. There's rock with a Christian twist. Frank Sinatra songs and Broadway show tunes helped raise the curtain.

And no GOP convention would be complete without country. The Gatlin Brothers started it all off on opening night by singing the anthem: young Republicans rocked Wednesday night to Brooks & Dunn's screaming recreation of Jimi Hendrix's version of "The Star-Spangled Banner."

Organizers have characterized the offerings as "preachers and patriotism." As with the Democrats in Boston, the convention proper is featuring acts not likely to offend delegates, with edgier performers taking the stage at other venues.

Kid Rock was the hot act Wednesday night, performing at the Avalon a dozen blocks away in a concert honoring House speaker, Rep. Dennis Hastert of Illinois, in one of the convention's most improbable pairings.

Music has been a convention tradition for ages, once designed to liven up proceedings for delegates who had real business to do — now part of a glossy, choreographed package to entertain the crowd and serve the party's message.

Minstrels played for conventioners who met in Chicago in 1860 to nominate Abraham Lincoln. "Happy Days Are Here Again," with lyrics penned by Jack Yellen, a Republican, became Franklin D.

Roosevelt's theme song in 1932 and a staple at Democratic conventions for decades.

Bill Clinton opted for a rock 'n' roll theme song in 1992. The Fleetwood Mac song "Don't Stop" became an anthem for Clinton's candidacy as he won over legions of young voters and defeated Bush's father.

In 2000, Ricky Martin's Latino beat enlivened the Republican convention and fit neatly into Bush's courtship of Hispanic voters.

Specific songs fit exact moments. The song "Knock on Wood" played this week when the convention roll call officially made Bush the nominee.

When Bush left a Columbus, Ohio, arena Wednesday to come to the convention, Sinatra's "New York, New York" rang out as he shook the last hands along the rope line.



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Experts say pain-free surgery not far off

BY JENNIFER C. YATES

The Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — All Deborah Keibler knew about hip replacement surgery was the long scar she had seen down the side of her grandmother's body. But when her doctor said the traditionally painful procedure could cure the limp in her right leg, the 49-year-old knew she didn't have a choice.

To her surprise, Keibler was able to leave the hospital the day of her operation and had so little pain she didn't even need painkillers.

Her hip was replaced through "keyhole" surgery — with miniature instruments through tiny incisions — and she was given a regional nerve block in her back instead of general anesthesia.

"For the vast majority of patients undergoing surgery, experiencing postoperative pain is not a must," said Dr. Jacques Chelly of the anesthesiology department with the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine.

In fact, some experts say pain-free surgery is not so far off.

Doctors say patients timid about having surgeries for fear of pain shouldn't put it off. A new focus on patient comfort and advances in pain management are making many procedures nearly pain-free.

Interest in controlling postoperative pain has exploded in the past five years, said Dr. Barry Cole, director of education for the American Academy of Pain Management, a 6,000-member organization that teaches pain management techniques.

Anesthesia has been a great tool to keep a patient asleep, immobile and out of pain

during complicated surgeries. But once someone wakes up, anesthesia does little to curb the pain caused by cutting into the body, he said.

Charlene Hill, a spokeswoman for the Joint Commission for the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations, said treating pain helps allay patients' fears about surgery, means less time for recovery and cuts health care costs. In 2001, the hospital accreditation agency adopted standards saying every patient should have the right to have pain assessed and treated.

The University of Pittsburgh Medical Center opened a pain center last year that deals with both chronic and surgical pain. One of its surgical techniques is a nerve block, an injection that blocks pain in a particular region of the body. It is being used during surgery and increasingly for postoperative pain management as well, allowing a decrease in morphine and other drugs whose side effects can slow recovery.

Nerve blocks have been around for years, but they are increasingly being employed for all sorts of surgeries. UPMC uses them in total knee and hip replacements, shoulder surgeries, removal of tumors from the leg and arm, breast surgeries, hernia repair and many other procedures.

Laparoscopy with its tiny incisions is also a breakthrough for many surgeries.

"If you don't have to cut this patient in half and you can do this with a small tube, it's certainly going to help at the end for treating the pain," said Chelly, a professor who is also director of orthopedic anesthesia and acute pain services at UPMC Shadyside.

Cole, a neurologist and psychiatrist, said



Deborah Keibler tends to her tomato plants on Tuesday, at her home in Freeport, Pa. Keibler, 49, underwent a minimally invasive hip replacement in May and didn't have to take prescription painkillers.

controlling postoperative pain begins before the surgery starts and involves not only the surgeon, but often the anesthesiologist, nurses, nurse practitioners and physician assistants.

Dr. James Rathmell, an anesthesiologist and chairman of the committee on pain medicine for the American Society of Anesthesiologists, said patients increasingly prefer regional anesthesia such as nerve blocks. He said technology, such as the de-

velopment of better needles, has led to more ways to deal with acute pain.

He cited knee replacement surgery as one of the best examples of improved pain management. The operation used to be incredibly painful, he said. Now, it can be done with a regional anesthetic.

"People really like to be awake, less sedated. They have less of the hangover feeling," Rathmell said. "We should be able to control the pain in the vast majority of folks."

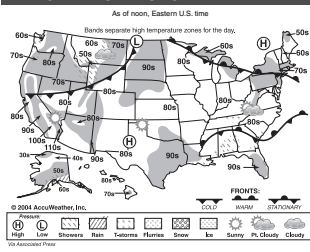
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FACES 'N' PLACES

The latest LL Cool J

Rapper reinvents himself over and over to stay in the hip-hop game

BY JIM FARBER

New York Daily News

NEW YORK — In the past year, Jay-Z has reigned from the rap race. So has DMX. But don't ask LL Cool J if he's next.

"Retirement isn't even a realistic conversation for me," says the rapper. "I'm nowhere near that page. I was born to do this."

And he has been doing this almost since he was born. For 19 years, LL has sustained a career in a field whose stars are lucky to last 19 minutes.

Call him the Madonna of hip hop. At 36, he knows how important it is to keep displaying new images to the public.

On Tuesday, he'll release his 10th album of new material, "The DEFinition." So, naturally, he has lately tweaked his look — and his clothes.

This time, he's making more attempts to keep them on.

Over the years, LL's naked torso has become as familiar a pop-culture touchstone as Jennifer Lopez's rump or 50 Cent's bullet scars.

These days, when magazine editors ask him to disrobe to show off his famously buff physique for photo shoots, he usually demurs.

"It gets tiring," LL explains. "It's like the guy you see at the gym with muscles who runs around with a tank top in winter. I don't want to be that guy."

Then again, just three weeks ago he tore off his top for the cameras at the "Today" show.

At least he's been more consistent in the tone of the clothes he sells. LL, one of the pioneers of hip-hop cross-marketing, is coming out with his third fashion line, which he's named after himself: James Todd Smith.

"It will be upscale," he hawks. "You'll have the ability to look like a million without spending a million."

But if LL means to give off certain messages of maturity, he has also made sure to keep a hold on youthful street culture. "The DEFinition" stresses club music, with an accent on upbeat tracks — thanks to Timbaland, the disk's prime producer.

It's rare for LL to devote so much of a CD to a single producer.

"We hit it off," he explains. "The chemistry was right."

The result isn't likely to put LL Cool J back at the cutting edge of hip-hop culture, which he occupied in the early '90s with classic albums like "Mama Said Knock You Out."

But at least it presents another side of a rapper who has already offered a more nuanced view of himself than many in the field.

LL "never put himself in a box as a one-dimensional character," says Erik Parker, music editor of Vibe. "He never hid behind a macho image."

And yet he doesn't lack for respect. LL has been able to pose on the cover of Vibe with his family (which includes three daughters and a son) without coming off like a Will Smith milquetoast.

His image has something in common with that of Bruce Springsteen, who likewise played good guy in a field of rebels while skirting the tag of wimp.

"I'm just being myself," LL says. "I don't have those issues. I come from a loving family. I think people respect you if you don't put on a facade."

The fact that some popular rappers push far crueler images has struck many pundits as an exploitation of racist images of African Americans.

LL doesn't buy it.

"It's just that way because a lot of young people like the tough guy," he explains. "They get off on Eminem's image, too. It's not racist. People like things that have that fear factor. Look, people watch people eat bugs on TV."

LL's own work on TV involved something considerably lighter — a sitcom on UPN called "In The House" (1998-99). He also has a long list of movie credits, from light fare like "Toys" and "Deliver Us From Evil" to action flicks like "S.W.A.T." and "Rollerball."

But now he's going serious.

This winter he'll be seen in "Edison," a morality tale involving cops and journalists, playing a corrupt cop opposite Morgan Freeman and Kevin Spacey.

Yet LL has lately become sick of everyone asking him just when he thinks he'll be too old for the rap game.

"That's a conversation for Mick Jagger or Steven Tyler," he says.

"I thought rock 'n' roll answered this question earlier. Hip-hop is only 25 years old. Who knows where it will go?"



ABACA PRESS, DARRIE ROTACH/KRT

LL Cool J performs on stage as part of NBC's "Today" show's Summer Concert Series at Rockefeller Plaza in New York City on August 6. The rapper, who's been on the hip-hop scene for several years, isn't planning to leave his life's passion any time soon.

Hilton sparkles with jewels

Paris Hilton, the hotel heiress famous for being famous, has created a jewelry line of pink sparkles, stars and hearts.

The Paris Hilton collection, which ranges in price from \$15 to \$95, is available exclusively at Amazon.com. It includes necklaces, earrings, a charm bracelet, a belly chain and a belly bar, all in sterling silver and pink crystal.

Hilton, 23, worked with a designer and modeled the jewelry shown on the Web site.

Knight leaves court for TV

The life and times of Bob Knight could soon be inside America's living rooms.

The fiery Texas Tech coach met with television officials last month in Los Angeles

and gave his approval for a sitcom deal. CBS and Paramount Television are exploring the development of a half-hour comedy that could run by next year.

Knight, 63, would serve as a consultant and said he might make guest appearances.

"Right now it's still in an embryonic stage," Lindy DeFover, who would serve as the show's executive producer, told the Lubbock Avalanche-Journal for Tuesday's editions.

Skating champ joins ice show

Sarah Hughes, the 2002 Olympic figure skating gold medalist, will skate with the Stars on Ice tour this season.

Hughes will take a one-year leave from Yale, where she was a freshman last year,

and will make her debut with the show Nov. 27 in Lake Placid, N.Y. She will skate the entire 60-city tour with Stars on Ice.

Stars on Ice, founded by 1984 Olympic champion Scott Hamilton, is entering its 19th season.

Monsters can be vain, too

Sanas Lathan shared the stage with rap mogul Sean "P. Diddy" Combs in "A Raisin in the Sun" on Broadway, but the 32-year-old actress says the Hollywood monsters in "Alien vs. Predator" were far more high-maintenance than Combs ever was.

"Alien vs. Predator" is set in Antarctica, where scientists are scouting out an ancient pyramid discovered below the ice. The gang, which includes expedition leader Alexa Woods (Lathan), stumbles onto

two extraterrestrial races fighting it out under the tundra.

"Both [the Alien and the Predator] were extreme divas," Lathan tells People magazine in its Sept. 6 issue.

"They had their own crews and glam squads."

Georgia to honor musicians

Singer Ray Charles and music publisher-entrepreneur Bill Lowery will be honored Sept. 18 during a ceremony when the Georgia Music Hall of Fame inducts four new members.

The hall of fame honors musicians and music industry professionals who are Georgia natives or live in the state. Both Charles and Lowery were among the first group to be inducted into the hall of fame in 1979.

Stories and photos from wire services.



Hilton



Knight



Combs



Charles

Tiger at large

LA FORT POLK — A Bengal tiger on the loose in the thick brush surrounding an Army base is winning a game of hide and seek.

A team of about 40 soldiers and sheriff's deputies searched the woods on Fort Polk on Tuesday, but saw no sign of the tiger.

"So far we've seen neither hide nor hair of it," said Scott Heinrich, owner of a wild animal consultancy brought in to track the tiger.

The search was set to resume Wednesday morning.

It was unclear where the animal came from, but it's likely that it was a pet that escaped or was set free, said Leslie Whitt, director of the Alexandria Zoo, who assisted in the search. Several witnesses said the animal was wearing a collar.

Heinrich said he and others scanned the woods from a helicopter but did not see the tiger. They continued their search on the ground, he said.

Based on witnesses descriptions, the tiger is probably about 100 pounds and 1 year old, Whitt said.

"It probably has no experience whatsoever in killing anything, catching it and eating it," Whitt said. "It's probably just freaked out and looking for a way back to where it belongs."

Statue being altered

NY ALBANY — Government cutbacks are hitting a continental soldier below the belt.

The statue of Copper John, a continental soldier that sits atop the state's Auburn Correctional Facility, was removed earlier this summer for renovation.

The beloved figure is set to return to his perch this fall, albeit a lesser man.

Workers sprucing up the 156-year-old statue were told to reduce the size of Copper John's crotch.

Neither the prison's superintendent nor the state Department of Correctional Services would discuss the reason for the order.

Department spokeswoman Linda Foglia confirmed the alteration took place.

Some correction officers aren't pleased with the reduction, and are donning shirts in protest.

Munchkins cause flap

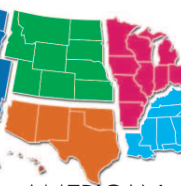
IN CHESTERTON — Two top Munchkins won't be taking the Yellow Brick Road to Chester-ton's annual Oz Festival this month because of a contract dispute.

Jerry Maren, who played the Lollipop Kid in "The Wizard of Oz," and Karl Slover, who played the First Trumpeter in the 1939 musical, have been regular attendees at past festivals in the town about 15 miles east of Gary.

But the two former Munchkins were "disinvited" this year following a flap over their agent's request that organizers pay his travel expenses, said Karen Spallina, president of Lakeshore Festival and Events.

Two other former Munchkins — Margaret Pellegrini and Clarence Swensen — still are scheduled to attend Sept. 17-19 festival.

In the past, organizers have dealt directly with the former Munchkins, Spallina said. But this



AMERICAN ROUNDUP

year, Maren and Slover referred her to their agent, Ralph Zelle.

Former Munchkins receive \$750 for their weekend visit, plus paid airfare, hotel and meals, Spallina said.

However, Zelle would want organizers to pay his expenses as Slover's traveling companion and allow him to set up a booth to sell Munchkin merchandise, said Spallina, who refused both requests.

New refueling station

ID HAUSER — At the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway's new refueling station, locomotive No. 4141 blasted through an opening ceremony ribbon.

Railroad officials hope that's the last time something breaks at the huge pit stop for freight trains hauling cargo between Chicago and Pacific Northwest ports. The ceremony was Tuesday and the station opens for business on Wednesday just east of Spokane, Wash.

The facility is built atop an aquifer that is the sole source of drinking water for some 400,000 people in the Spokane area, but railroad officials insist they built so many safeguards in the \$42 million project that the water will remain safe.

"I've never seen a facility designed with this level of protection," said project manager Kenny Hancock of the engineering firm



Electrical explosion

Mountain Home firefighters extinguish an electrical fire in Mountain Home, Ark. Four workers for North Arkansas Electric Cooperative were hurt Tuesday, three of them severely, when a transformer they were moving exploded. Electric cooperative spokesman Jerry Estes said the utility was assessing the damage and trying to determine the cause of the blast.

Hanson-Wilson Inc. of Kansas City, Mo.

New delegate

KY FRANKFORT Hip surgery knocked Lt. Gov. Steve Pence out of the Republican National Convention. Pence underwent a hip replacement on July 31. An aide says he remained in Kentucky on his doctor's advice. Most Kentucky delegates, including Gov. Ernie Fletcher, arrived Sunday. Pence was replaced as a delegate by Hilda Leggs of Somerset.

Ancient tsunami find

HI HONOLULU — Scientists have determined a gigantic tsunami hit the Big Island 120,000 years ago, surging almost 4 miles inland and depositing fossil-laden sand up to an elevation of at least 1,600 feet.

The tsunami was generated by the Aikua 2 Landslide, which came down the western slope of nearby Mauna Loa, the University of Hawaii's School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology said Wednesday.

The resulting wave surged across a coral terrace, now located at a depth of 1,400 feet, before moving inland, scientists said.

The wave left a deposit of smashed-up marine shells, chunks of lava rock, lumps of soil and fragments of coral, all cemented together by what was once coralline sand, the school said.

Defibrillators in schools

NJ NEWARK — All 77 schools in New Jersey's largest school district are being equipped with machines that jolt a stopped heart back to beating. Newark purchased 150 automated external defibrillators for about \$275,000 and trained school nurses to use them. Officials said they knew of no cases in Newark schools where a defibrillator was needed, but said there have been cases elsewhere.

Bones will stay buried

IA IOWA CITY — The dead at the University of Iowa's football stadium will stay buried. When Kinnick Stadium was built in 1928, horses and mules were used as heavy earth-movers. Some died after breaking their legs or getting stuck in the mud. Instead of pulling them out, the animals were buried beneath the north end zone. An \$87 million renovation begins after this season, but university said the bones will be left alone.

Near-miss at airport

CA LOS ANGELES — An Asiana Airlines jet arriving at Los Angeles International Airport last month came within several hundred feet of a departing Southwest Airlines flight in broad daylight, it was reported Wednesday.

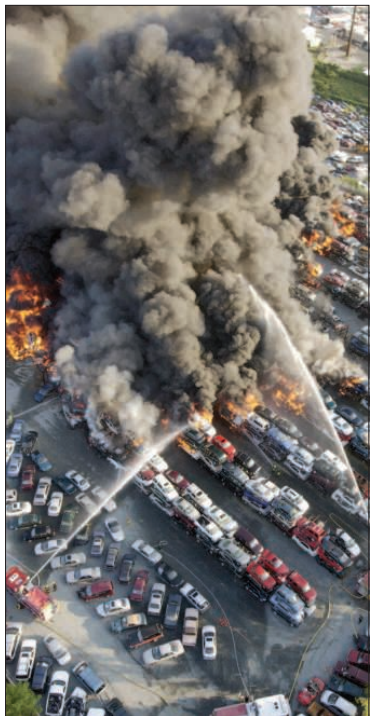
A report obtained by the Los Angeles Times said a mix-up in the air control tower may have placed both planes on the same runway, the newspaper reported.

A captain aboard the Asiana Boeing 747, which was arriving from Incheon, South Korea, aboard the landing Aug. 19 and came within several hundred feet of a Southwest jet headed to Albuquerque, the report showed.

The National Transportation Safety Board is investigating the incident.



Art from sand Alan Matsumoto, of Roanoke, Va., a member of the Sandscapes sand sculpture company group, works on a sculpture at the Colorado State Fair in Pueblo, Colo. The sculpture, which is a free attraction at the fair, is near completion and is entitled "20,000 Leagues Under the Sea."



Junkyard fire Firefighters battle a massive fire at an automobile salvage yard in Newport, Del. Jim Rosseel, a dispatcher with New Castle County, said about 20 firefighting units had responded to the blaze, and that tanker trucks from Chester County, Pa., also were on the way.



Light work Dennis Swift prepares street lights for installation under the hot sun in Bakersfield, Calif. The lights were part of a remodeling project for a local hospital.



On track for the festival Eutimio Sanchez Nava works on a roller coaster ride in preparation for Santa-Cal-Gon Days in Independence, Mo. The annual festival starts with the opening of the carnival Thursday and runs through Monday.



Auto facts from Otto Otto the Auto teaches students about traffic and pedestrian safety at Mesilla Park Elementary School in Las Cruces, N.M. The interactive car, which is part of AAA New Mexico's public affairs outreach program, uses songs, blinking headlights and a kid-friendly presentation to instill good traffic habits in young children, according to AAA's Brenda Yager.

Would-be robber flubs it

MA BOSTON — Paul Michael Callahan was a bank robber in search of a bank, according to police.

First thing Monday morning, he allegedly tried to rob a copy shop at Boston University thinking it was a bank. Boston police said he walked into the shop on Commonwealth Avenue and passed a note to a store employee asking for money. When he was told the shop wasn't a bank, Callahan asked for directions to the nearest Fleet bank branch, police said.

About 40 minutes later, he allegedly robbed a Fleet branch — but came away with less than \$200.

By Monday afternoon, Callahan allegedly held up a Citizen's Bank, making off with \$2,500. But a bright red dye pack exploded as he fled in his truck, which got a flat tire not far away.

In a last-ditch effort to get away, police said Callahan, covered in red dye, abandoned his truck and ran to a Brookline gas station, where he asked a customer there to use his cell phone. He wanted to report his truck stolen.

Police found Callahan, 32, hiding in the gas station.

Same first school day?

GA ATLANTA — State politicians are considering passing a law to make the first day of school the same for all students in the state. Parents complain that starting early squeezes family vacation time and raises taxpayer-funded power bills at schools that rely on air conditioning to stay cool in the August heat.

Nearly every school was back in session by Aug. 9.

State changes tax code

MI LANSING — To better collect the state sales tax on Internet and catalogue purchases, Michigan made changes to its tax code in line with other states participating in the effort. The changes, which take effect Wednesday, affect items that had been tax free and now will have the 6 percent tax applied. The effort is supposed to make it more appealing for businesses to collect state taxes.

No-call law upheld

CO DENVER — A federal judge upheld Colorado's no-call law that bars telemarketers from phoning residents whose numbers appear on a state list. Colorado Citizens for Free Speech, a group headed by mortgage company owner Jeffrey Burke, argued the law was an unconstitutional regulation of commercial speech. Telemarketers can be fined as much as \$2,000 for each unwanted phone call.

Officers, firemen rehired

MA SPRINGFIELD — A state-controlled financial oversight board agreed to rehire some laid-off Springfield police officers and firefighters. The vote came after Executive Director Philip Pucci warned the city's financial situation might be worse than expected. Pucci called his figures "very preliminary." Police Chief Paula Meara said 17 patrolmen, 17 civilian workers and six police cadets would be rehired.

Smoking ban at park

CA SANTA BARBARA — Bone-dry conditions are bringing additional restrictions for visitors to Los Padres National Forest, including a smoking ban. Starting Wednesday, fires or stoves fueled by gas or jellied fuel will be banned except in designated campsites. Wildlife dangers make restrictions necessary because moisture levels are down to 56 percent, already below the critical 60 percent level.

Bringing vote to victims

AZ PHOENIX — A voter drive is tapping domestic-violence victims. VotePower aims to get women in shelters to cast ballots by helping them register and fill out affidavits requesting confidentiality. Fear of being found has been a big obstacle for victims who may be inclined to vote but won't risk their safety. The National Network to End Domestic Violence is funding the effort.

Bank of Bedrock a scam

CO DENVER — Federal regulators shut down a phony Internet bank claiming to be located in the tiny Colorado town of Bedrock — population 10 — near the Utah state line.

Through its Web site, the First National Bank of Bedrock offered deposit accounts, investments, debit cards and credit cards, according to the Federal Office of the Comptroller of the Currency.

The address listed for the bank — 7729 S. Granite Ave. — doesn't exist, said Bedrock postmaster Ruth Swain.

Regulators said it was unclear if the Web site was a joke, perhaps in reference to the fictional town on the old "Flintstones" TV show.

But the Web site could have been an attempt to collect personal information, said Kevin Mulri, spokesman for the currency controller's office.

There are a lot of scams out there, he told the Los Angeles Times.

The Web site seems to have been registered under a fictitious name, the office said.

Bedrock, an old mining town, still receives mail for Fred and Wilma Flintstone and their cartoon pals, Barney and Betty Rubble, said Swain. She stamps them "Return to Sender: Fictitious Cartoon Character."

Former mayor indicted

GA ATLANTA — Former Mayor Bill Campbell says a federal indictment accusing him of taking tens of thousands of dollars in bribes from city contractors was built on lies "from beginning to end."

"The only thing that's correct in this indictment is the spelling of my name," Campbell told reporters Monday after officials announced the indictment.

The indictment follows a five-year federal investigation into City Hall during Campbell's two terms as mayor, from 1994 to 2002.

The 51-year-old Democrat is accused of accepting illegal campaign contributions, cash, free travel and hotel improvements in exchange for city contracts.

The indictment accuses Campbell of "a pattern and practice of misconduct and illegal acts."

Stories and photos from wire services

OPINION

Terror must never be condoned or rewarded

BY CLIFFORD D. MAY

Scripts Howard News Service

As President Clinton might say, "It depends on what the meaning of 'win' is."

By now, you've no doubt read all about it: President Bush told NBC's Matt Lauer that he didn't think America could win the war on terrorism. Vice presidential candidate John Edwards accused Bush of declaring defeat.

Bush then told Rush Limbaugh that what he meant to say was that the current global conflict is not like World War II. No enemy general is going to hand over his weapons in ceremonial surrender.

But that's not how the last great international struggle ended either. The Cold War, which some historians now call World War III — concluded when the Soviet Union collapsed and ordinary citizens smashed the Berlin Wall into paperweights.

In the war on terrorism — or World War IV — the Free World is battling totalitarian ideologies that have borrowed freely from both Communism and Nazism, but which stake their claim to legitimacy on a radical interpretation of Islam and Islam's doctrine of jihad, or holy war.

Terrorism — the deliberate slaughter of civilians by combatants disguising themselves as civilians — is simply the means by which the jihadis believe they can defeat decadent, infidel democracies.

And terrorism is a weapon the jihadis believe they have all at themselves — infidels, they are confident, will not indiscriminately slaughter them and their families. Our reluctance to use this weapon is, in their view, a symptom of our weakness.

Terrorism is not a new weapon. But on 9/11, terrorists armed with hijacked passenger jets wreaked havoc on an unprecedented scale. Terrorists armed with nuclear, chemical or biological weapons would escalate such crimes to apocalyptic levels.

Some analysts believe that such an attack is all but inevitable. The only hope of preventing it aggressively and pre-emptively

hunt down terrorists, and target dictators who support terrorists.

That, by the way, is the link between 9/11 and Saddam Hussein.

After that atrocity, Saddam had to be viewed through a sharper lens. His menace measured by a different yardstick. So, too, North Korea's Kim Jong Il and the mullahs of Iran. This seems a simple proposition, yet many otherwise-intelligent people fail to grasp it.

Winning World War IV also requires delegitimizing terrorism. Terrorism today is a thriving enterprise because for at least three decades terrorists have been rewarded. Republicans and Democrats alike have been responsible for this error — Europeans even more so.

Almost exactly 32 years ago, Palestinian terrorists entered the Olympic Village in Munich, Germany, and massacred 11 innocent Israeli athletes.

That act of mass murder was not considered sufficiently serious to merit cancelling the Olympics or even postponing it for a day.

The group responsible for the killings, the Palestine Liberation Organization, received more encouragement than condemnation. Two years later, PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat was invited to address the United Nations. The PLO was received in the General Assembly and "the question of Palestine" was introduced on the agenda.

A few years later, Arafat won a Nobel Peace Prize. Abu Daoud, the unrepentant terrorist who planned the 1972 massacres, received the Palestinian Prize for Culture.

And everyone else in the world with grievances and complaints learned the rules: Terrorism is acceptable. Terrorism works. Terrorism succeeds like nothing else. So why not employ it?

Over the years that followed, to the extent terrorists were pursued, it was less by soldiers, commandos and spies than by lawyers armed with subpoenas.

Terrorists and their masters were seldom punished. There is a name for such policies: appeasement.



Clearly we need new and better policies. Surely the United States needs to develop intelligence and clandestine services capable of ferreting out terrorists wherever they hide, train and plot.

There must be expansion of our now-tiny Special Forces, the component of the military machine best equipped to fight 21st century warfare.

A war of ideas must be fought as well. It must stop being socially acceptable to excuse terrorism (e.g., "One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter"; "They must be so desperate!"). Yes, in the past, terrorism has been condoned. But morality evolves. Not so long ago, genocide, slavery and piracy also were common practices. Should that mean that we tolerate those evils forever, too? Terrorism must come to be seen as not just a crime but also a blunder. It must be demonstrated repeatedly that terrorism sets back the cause in whose name it is committed, no matter how righteous some people may believe that cause to be.

Eventually, the extremist, supremacist, totalitarian ideologies championed by Osama bin Laden, Saddam Hussein, the Iranian mullahs and others must be regarded as a dead end, figuratively and literally.

Bin Laden famously said, "When people see a strong horse and a weak horse, they naturally choose the strong horse." He understands the dynamics of public persuasion better than many State Department officials. It falls to America to lead the effort to demonstrate that freedom and democracy are the strongest horses on the track.

In the 20th century, America and its friends defeated both Communism and Nazism. There are still Communists and Nazis in the world but their movements are weak and unappealing to all but a lunatic fringe.

Memo to the candidates: This is what "win" means. Tell us you understand. Tell us you'll do what it takes.

Clifford D. May is the president of the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, a policy institute focusing on terrorism.

Schwarzenegger's close-up revealed his progress

Los Angeles Times

Tony Quinn, a GOP political consultant in Sacramento, raised an intriguing possibility in a newsletter Tuesday, hours before California's governor stepped onto the podium in New York: The U.S. Constitution doesn't seem to bar Austrian-born Arnold Schwarzenegger from becoming vice president.

But it's hard to envision Schwarzenegger as No. 2 in anything, much less worry about how he could constitutionally serve if the presidency went vacant. For all the might-have-beens and could-bes, millions of Americans got a taste Tuesday night of what California knows, that Schwarzenegger is more than a caricature of his film self. He wove a compelling story of "a once-scrappy boy" coming to the United States from the stifling isolation of Austria, seeking opportunity and forging success for himself, from bodybuilder to actor to governor.

"To my fellow immigrants listening tonight, I want you to know how welcome you are in this party," he said. "We Republicans admire your ambition. We encourage your dreams."

Those words no doubt were sincere, but Schwarzenegger's promise to veto a bill that would allow illegal immigrants to obtain driver's licenses may dim the luster of his speech among Latinos. The governor does occasionally say things one

way and do them another.

In his address Schwarzenegger played the loyal warrior, another thoroughgoing moderate finding a way to call unreservedly for President Bush's re-election, praising the commander in chief in "Terminator" terms as "a leader who doesn't flinch and who doesn't waver."

He painted a dazzling picture of a prosperous, diverse, strong and generous America under Republican leadership. He emphasized

his own pro-business fiscal conservatism and left unmentioned his own aversion, to many Republican leaders, positions on abortion, stem-cell research, protection of the environment and gun control. He did say it was possible to disagree and "still be patriotic, still be good Republicans!"

Schwarzenegger's in-laws are in the enemy camp, and he worked more closely with majority Democrats in the Legislature this year than with Republicans, who op-

posed his attempts to find a middle course in closing budget gaps. He infuriated big sides with his combination of full-bore cajoling and half-funny threats.

But the job of an action hero is to get things done. The nation on Tuesday night saw the charm, chutzpah, good humor and determination that Schwarzenegger mixes to move things along, including the president's re-election bid. He even worked in a way to say "gittle men" — a line that brought delegates to their feet.

Mallard Fillmore

BY BRUCE TINSLEY



Horoscope

The Virgo sun and Taurus moon resonate with common purpose. There's an easy connection between what we're doing and how we feel about it. When action is in line with powerful emotion, we can give a top performance. Apply this star power to your favorite project, and you'll work up a momentum you'll be able to keep all weekend.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY

(September 3). This is your year to roar—now, while everyone's listening. Whether it's through writing, lecturing, teaching or travel, the world is ready to hear what you have to say. It's time to take all that life experience and turn it into gold. Overindulging may lead to health problems, so pay attention to food and exercise. Lucky love signs are Libra and Aquarius.

ARIES (March 21-April 19).

You're used to breaking new ground, but now's the time to let others do it for you. Good leaders delegate. Slow down just a bit so you can pick up speed later this week when you really need it.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20).

You want to dig your heels in because you're right. But first, ask yourself, "Is being right worth losing ground?" Resist the temptation to say, "My way or the highway." Remember the highway can get mighty lonely.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21).

Newspapers, legal documents and office memos—they all have different things to say, but on another level, they all say the same thing to you: "The opportunity that you've been looking for is here now." Trust yourself.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). It's nice to cozy down at home and shut the world out, but today is not the day. Adventure awaits. You can go kicking and screaming or just go—the choice is always yours! A good kick in the status quo is just what the doctor ordered.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Work hard, but work smart—no need to waste energy on worry and anxiety. Indulge yourself in the luxury of a big

yawn and a nice stretch. You deserve it. Avoid conflict; things won't go your way if you decide to take someone on.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). It's good to be boss, even if you're only the boss of you. Exercise your personal authority, and make positive changes in your environment. Organize your closets, and clear out your clutter. Make space for the unexpected.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Listen. Do you hear music? If you don't, run—on your nearest CD, mp3 player or radio, and pump up the volume on your favorite tunes. Music has the power to move you to accomplish the difficult or even impossible.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). It's not your imagination. No one really understands you, but who cares? They all adore you. Rock stars, super models and Scorpios all share the same problem—under that tough-as-nails exterior beats the heart of a sensualist.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Favorable conditions don't last forever, but you know how to track them down when you need them most. Your normally gregarious disposition will be challenged, but you can find the opportunity in the seeming obstacle.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Personal wealth is on your mind, and you have the tools to increase yours today. Real-estate opportunities are revealed, but there may be hidden problems. Check all plumbing before you commit.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Pay attention to your dreams. Daydreams and dreams and even nightmares all have special messages, and you're the one with the key to their meaning. Just because something frightens you doesn't mean it will harm you.

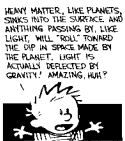
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Look for hidden truth. Your intuition is your best friend. You are drawn to beauty. Beautiful people, artwork and architecture can all have a positive influence. Seek solace in a special place, such as a church, temple or garden.

Creators Syndicate

Joyce Jillion



Calvin and Hobbes



Jump Start



Zits



Cathy



Hi and Lois



Beetle Bailey



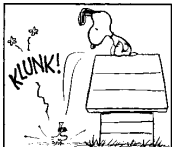
Red and Rover



Better or Worse



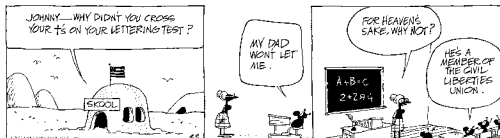
Peanuts



Fotrot



B.C.



Baby Blues



Spider Man



Blondie



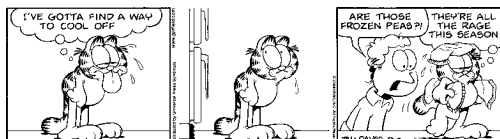
Dilbert



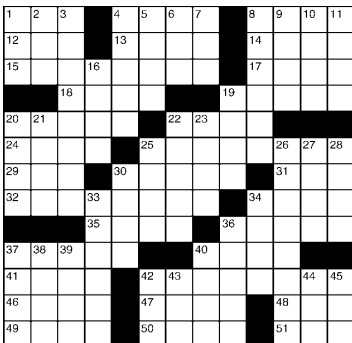
Hagar



Garfield



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



Across

- 1 Snapshot
- 4 Settle down heavily
- 8 Long-running musical
- 12 Oklahoma city
- 13 Mississippi River feeder
- 14 Malaria symptom
- 15 Saturday morning fare
- 17 Poison
- 18 Lacking slack
- 19 Seraglio
- 20 Falls (over)
- 22 Existed
- 24 Quest for adventure
- 25 GIs' home
- 29 Prior to
- 30 Without a break
- 31 Literary collection
- 32 Snarl up
- 34 Boast
- 35 Defeat
- 36 Annie of "Any Day Now"
- 37 Topiarist's canvases
- 40 Milne bruin
- 41 Weaver's need
- 42 Romance writer
- 46 In due course
- 47 Moises of baseball
- 48 Sticky stuff
- 49 Drew Carey's nemesis
- 50 Lowers the lights
- 51 44-Dun ingredient

Down

- 1 Lobbyist org.
- 2 McKinley's first lady
- 3 North Carolina county
- 4 Sanctimonious
- 5 Booty
- 6 Possess
- 7 -de structure
- 8 Poolside decoration
- 9 Culture medium
- 10 Melody
- 11 Appear
- 16 Chatter
- 19 Drove
- 20 "Fish Magic" artist
- 21 Deserve
- 22 Juggler's equipment
- 23 Pennsylvania port
- 25 Marshes
- 26 Ancient African city
- 27 Gordius' challenge
- 28 Proverbs
- 30 Nose-in-the-air sort
- 33 Grads
- 34 Aloof
- 36 Acronym for George W.
- 37 Wrestling maneuver
- 38 Hagar the Horrible's daughter
- 39 Leeway
- 40 Senior year highlight
- 42 Soundrel
- 43 — Baba Yuletide refreshment
- 45 Follow relentlessly

Answer to Previous Puzzle



9-3

CRYPTOQUIP

H P F X X S P Y K T C K
O S F L H P T R Y O K P W S L P R C U U
B T H U E L Y O B S F U E D Y

U C D Y U Y E "W S S E W S L K S K."
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: AT THE TENNIS SUPPLY STORE, ONE WOULD SUPPOSE THEY'RE CONCERNED WITH NET SALES.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: K equals T

Cross has woman at crossroads

Dear Abby: I am in a terrible bind. Some years ago, I made a Halloween costume for a former roommate, "Connie." The costume was a nun's habit and it came out great. When I showed her the costume, I had a cross with it that had belonged to an aunt of my mother's who had been a nun in a religious order. Connie begged to borrow the cross, and I lent it to her against my better judgment. She then moved to California and I lost touch with her.

Now my mother is asking for the cross, and I'm afraid to tell her that I made a family heirloom part of a Halloween costume.

Connie refuses to return it to me, saying that she returned it "years ago." I have sent her several e-mails. Now she has changed her e-mail address to avoid me. You are my last hope. I know Connie is a devoted reader of your column and so is her mother—so all I want is the costume. I'm praying

they will see themselves and save me from the wrath of my mother.

—Desperate Daughter,
Staten Island

Dear Desperate: The cross should have been returned to you the day after Halloween. If it was inconvenient for Connie to bring it to you, you should have made it your business to go and collect it. It's a shame that your former friend is lying about having returned the cross.

Dear Abby



What she's probably afraid to admit is that she or her mother lost it, and now she's hiding. My advice to you is to level with your mother and start praying that she's forging. It's time to face the music.

Dear Abby: Before I was a stay-at-home mom to my daughter, I had a circle of friends with whom I had a lot in common. None of us had children, and we were all focused on advancing our careers.

I have since moved to a different town and have thrown myself into my daughter's activities and the new community. I stay in touch with my old friends via e-mail, and we see each other two or three times a year, but I feel that we have drifted apart.

I would rather spend my free time with my husband and daughter. Should I feel guilty for wanting to phase out these friendships?

—Devoted Mom
in Livermore, Calif.

Dear Devoted Mom: For friendships to stay healthy and vital, there must be a commonality of interests. When you were a career woman, you had ties that bound you to these women. Now that your life has changed, it's not surprising that the bonds of camaraderie have loosened.

However, you might want to resume your career at some point. So, my advice to you is don't burn your bridges—you may regret it later.

Letters for this column—with your name and phone number—should be addressed to Dear Abby, P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles CA 90069. Readers can write to Abby on the Internet at: <http://www.ueppress.com/dearabby>

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

WHOYS



KROPE



PRIMEE



KITSCY



Answer:



Yesterday's

IN



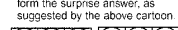
Jumbles: GULCH AGONY POLISH FETISH

Answer: The instructor insisted on when the singer wanted to be a pilot — A "SOLO" FLIGHT

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Mike Argiron



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.



(Answers tomorrow)

Worried friend could be pedophile

Dear Annie: I have a male friend, 35 years old, who recently took a trip with family. "Dean" told me that all of the kids—three nieces, ages 5, 12 and 15, and a nephew, age 6, wanted to sleep with him in a king-sized bed. I'm honestly the situation, the kids rotated nights, each taking a turn sleeping with him.

I told Dean I considered it inappropriate for a 35-year-old man to sleep in the same bed as his teenage nieces. Also, Dean has made comments, jokingly (or so I thought), about young girls being "hot."

He once said this about his cousin's 14-year-old daughter. He also told me all three of his nieces wanted to marry him when they were little girls, and the youngest draws pictures of them getting married.

Is this normal? I'm not accusing Dean of anything, but I'm wondering if he is some kind of pedophile. He seems to be a very nice man and has made romantic

advances toward me. However, I don't see how I can continue our friendship when I have such strong reservations about his character. I would feel terrible if something happened to a child and I ignored the warning signs.

—Worried
in Atlanta

Dear Atlanta: Dean should NOT be sharing a bed with his 12-year-old and 15-year-old nieces, although knowing his nieces and nephew were eager to sleep with him tends to indicate nothing disturbing is going on (yet). The fact that the 5-year-old draws pictures of him marrying her is no big deal. It is quite common for young girls to have crushes on their uncles or other relatives. It does bother us, however, that Dean thinks 14-year-old girls are "hot," although to be fair, some teenage girls dress to provoke such reactions.

Talk to Dean and explain your concerns about him sleeping

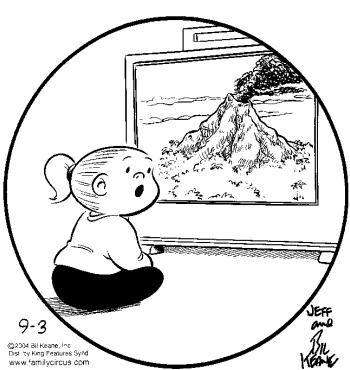
with his teenage nieces. He sounds more like an obnoxious uncle than a pedophile, but it won't hurt to let him know how his behavior appears to others and see what he says.

Dear Annie: You agreed with "Grand Ledge, Mich.," who said to use "fewer" for plural words and "less" for singular. Actually, fewer is used for things that can be counted (discrete variables) such as cows, and less is used for things that are measured (continuous variables) such love, news or rain.

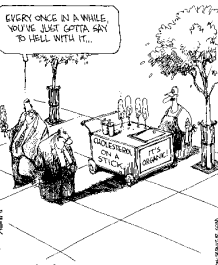
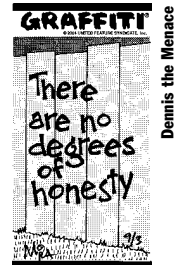
Dear Professor: We thought "plural" and "singular" made it simpler, but now we know better. Our thanks to all the English majors, editors and language mavens who told us otherwise. We bow to your superior intellect.

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sauer, longtime editors of the Ann Landers column. Please e-mail your questions to anniesmailbox@comcast.net, or write to: Annie's Mailbox, c/o Creators Syndicate, 5777 W. Century Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90045. Creators Syndicate

Family Circus



"Hurry! The volcano's about to interrupt!"



Jets sign Pennington to \$64M contract extension

The Associated Press

HEMPSTEAD, N.Y. — Chad Pennington agreed to a \$64 million, seven-year contract extension with the New York Jets on Wednesday that includes \$23 million in guaranteed money.

A source familiar with the negotiations, speaking on the condition of anonymity, told The Associated Press that Pennington will average \$9.172 million a year. The quarterback, entering his fifth season, also receives the second-largest amount of up-front money, behind only Indianapolis quarterback Peyton Manning, who got a \$34.5 million signing bonus earlier this year. The total value of Pennington's deal is \$64.197 million.

Both of those contracts were negotiated by Tom Condon, who was not available for comment Wednesday. The Jets do not release contract terms.



Pennington, the 18th overall pick in the 2000 draft, has been the Jets' starter in only 23 games. He comes off an injury-racked season, but in 2002 he replaced Vinny Testaverde as the starter a month into the schedule and led the Jets to the AFC East title. He also led the NFL in passing efficiency that season with a 104.2 rating, 3,120 yards, 22 touchdowns and just six interceptions.

The size of Pennington's deal could cripple the Jets in future negotiations with their own free agents. Defensive ends John Abraham and Shaun Ellis and tight end Anthony Becht, all first-round draft picks in 2000 along with Pennington, are in their final contract years. So is running back LaMont Jordan.

Pennington instructed Condon to make the new contract as salary cap friendly as possible.

"Tom knows how I feel about being a team player so we can keep players," Pennington said.

Shipp won't sail this year

TEMPE, Ariz. — The Arizona Cardinals placed running back Marcel Shipp and fullback James Hodgins on injured reserve Wednesday and claimed running back Akeem Casen and defensive tackle Shaun Smith off waivers.

Shipp broke his left leg and ankle in an Aug. 6 training camp scrimmage in Flagstaff and will miss the entire season. He played in all 16 games for the Cardinals last year, starting 11, and rushed for 830 yards.

Chiefs put Boeriger on IR

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Kansas City Chiefs wide receiver Marc

Boeriger was placed on injured reserve Wednesday after injuring his knee without taking a hit in a preseason game.

Boeriger was hurt Saturday night in the first quarter of the Chiefs' game against Cleveland. He performed well in training camp and was expected to be the team's third receiver.

He had been scheduled to have knee surgery Monday, but that was delayed after the third-year receiver decided to get other opinions from doctors about whether the surgery was necessary.

Titans' Calico has surgery

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Doctors easily removed a piece of torn cartilage Wednesday from Tennessee receiver Tyrone Calico's left knee, and cornerback Samari Rolle met with a doctor for a second opinion on his right ankle.

Calico was on crutches Wednesday afternoon, and coach Jeff Fisher

said doctors were encouraged by how well the surgery went.

Calico is expected to miss the season opener Sept. 12 and be out up to three weeks after spraining both knees in Monday night's game against Dallas.

Fisher said Rolle would be able to play if this were the regular season, but he said the cornerback has had some slight swelling in his ankle. The team wanted another opinion after using a variety of devices trying to help Rolle take pressure off the joint.

Dolphins sign DE Ahanotu

MIAMI — The Miami Dolphins signed veteran defensive end Chidi Ahanotu on Wednesday.

The 33-year-old Ahanotu played in all 16 games with the San Francisco 49ers last season, starting one game and recording 30 tackles and four sacks. Ahanotu has spent 11 years in the NFL with Tampa Bay, St. Louis, Buffalo and San Francisco.

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The Latest News, Features & Photos

IRAQ UPDATE



AFGHANISTAN UPDATE



Messages to the Troops
Ways to Support the Troops



Healthy Davenport thriving in U.S. Open

No. 5 seed wins 19th consecutive match

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Lindsay Davenport's summer of success stayed on course Thursday when the fifth-seeded former U.S. Open champion defeated Arantxa Parra Santonja 6-4, 6-2 and advanced to the third round of the season's final Grand Slam.

It was the 19th straight match won by Davenport, who came into the Open with consecutive hard-court tournament titles at Stanford, Los Angeles, San Diego and Cincinnati.

This one was difficult at times.

Beset by an unusual rash of early unforced errors, Davenport was broken in the fourth game of the first set and it seemed to get her attention. She broke right back to keep the set on serve and then broke Parra Santonja in the ninth game. Serving for the set, Davenport won it at love, finishing with an ace.

After that, Davenport took charge, seizing every opportunity, sweeping through the first five games of the second set. After 13 unforced errors in the first set, Davenport's game seemed to settle down.

But serving for the match, Davenport was broken again, plagued by double faults. It was a momentary interruption. She wound up serving out the match, finishing with an ace.

Also on the schedule for Thursday's fourth day of action were sixth-seeded Andre Agassi, French Open champions Gaston Gaudio and Anastasia Myskina, Athens silver medalists Mardy Fish and Wimbledon champion Maria Sharapova.

Night matches featured No. 11 Venus Williams and No. 3 Carlos Moya.

On a Day 3 that included expected victories by major champions Roger Federer, Lleyton Hewitt and Jennifer Capriati, and none-too-surprising exits by Gustavo Kuerten and Mark Philippoussis, 19-year-old Angela Haynes got a chance in the spotlight.

Haynes, who hit her first tennis strokes on the same Compton courts that produced Serena and Venus Williams, tasted her first bit of the Grand Slam success so familiar to the Williams sisters, upsetting 22nd-seeded Magdalena Maleeva 6-2, 6-3 on Wednesday night.

"Everybody peaks at different times, so maybe I am a late bloomer," said Haynes, a wild card ranked 185th. "But I just have to stay within myself, play my game, do what I do best."

She lost in the first round of last year's Open, then lost in the first round of qualifying in the Australian Open in January.

That was the sum of Haynes' Grand Slam experience until Monday, when she beat Tatiana Perebrynina in a third-set tiebreaker.

Haynes handled Maleeva impressively in the 6,106-seat Grandstand, the largest arena she's played in, hanging tough even after wasting three match points. Haynes never lost her serve, and kept her unforced errors to a minimum (14).

"Here is the best place to win, get back to where I was and maybe better," Haynes said. "Definitely, it is my biggest win, but I



Lindsay Davenport, above, the 1998 U.S. Open champion, defeated Arantxa Parra Santonja 6-4, 6-2 on Thursday afternoon.

can't dwell on this match. I really have to stay focused here."

Even if she loses to No. 16 Francesca Schiavone in the third round, she's guaranteed to make \$40,000 — more than the total prize money offered in several of the minor league tournaments she struggled in this year.

That didn't seem likely coming in. Just last week, Haynes failed to even qualify for a hard-court tuneup in New Haven, Conn., the third time in 2004 she didn't make it into the main draw of a WTA Tour event.

In her most recent full-fledged tour appearance, she lost in straight sets to Lindsay Lee-Waters, who happened to be Serena Williams' opponent Wednesday.

Williams, who warmed up wearing a black jacket and zip-away faux boots, won 6-4, 6-3 to set up a third-round match against No. 30 Tatiana Golovin.

Top-ranked Federer, trying to become the first man since 1988 to win three Slams in a season, moved into the third round Wednesday night with his 300th career match victory, 6-2, 6-7 (4), 6-3, 6-1 over qualifier Marcos Baghdatis of Cyprus.

Capriati reached the third round by winning the first eight games and the last four of a 6-0, 6-2 victory over Magui Serna, while No. 2 Amelie Mauresmo got past 105th-ranked Julia Vakulenko 3-6, 6-2, 6-2. Mauresmo overcame 34 unforced errors, with 10 double-faults.

"I started very slow in the first set," said Mauresmo, an Olympic silver medalist. "I'm looking forward to improve my game because I am not satisfied now."

Both singles bronze medalists in Athens — No. 14 Fernando Gonzalez and No. 17 Alicia Molik — lost, as did three-time French Open champion Kuerten, who's been fighting a bad right hip.

Philippoussis, runner-up in the Open in 1998 and Wimbledon last year, quit with a hip injury in the fifth set of his match against Nikolay Davydenko.

But 2001 Open champion Hewitt stretched his winning streak to 11 matches by putting away Wayne Ferreira 6-1, 7-5, 6-4. It's a record 56th straight major tournament for Ferreira, who will retire after playing Davis Cup for South Africa this month.

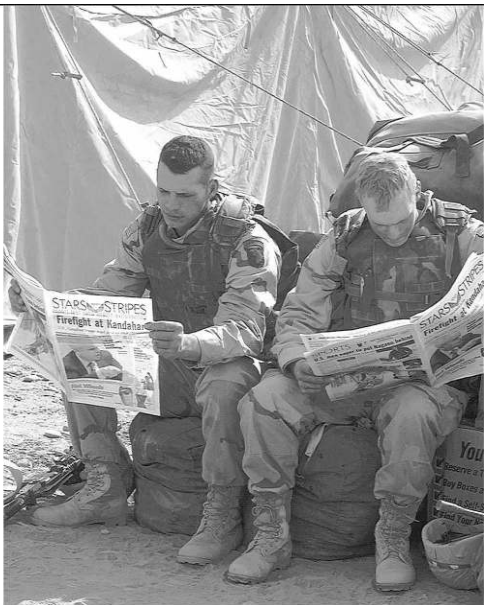
See Page 24 for scores.

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Wood helps Cubs overcome poor hitting

The Associated Press

MONTREAL — The Chicago Cubs found a good way to make up for their poor hitting — a shutout pitching performance by Kerry Wood.

Wood's eighth shutout innings made up for another listless performance by the Cubs' offense and gave Chicago the lead in the National League wild-card race.

The Cubs beat the Montreal Expos 2-1 in 11 innings Wednesday night, taking two of three in the series with the Expos despite scoring just four earned runs. That was enough to give them a one-game edge over Barry Bonds and the Giants, and push them three games ahead of the hard-charging, homer-happy Houston Astros.

Tony Armas and three others held the Cubs scoreless through nine innings for a second straight night, but Chicago used a wild pitch by Claudio Vargas (5-5) to finally break through in the 11th. After Nomar Garciaparra scrambled home from third, Mark Grudzielanek provided insurance with an RBI single.

NL Roundup

"Both guys pitched great," Sammy Sosa said. "Good pitching is going to stop good hitting, no question about it. Wood was awesome and the other guy was awesome, and we just kept grinding. We never gave up. We go out there and play the game hard every day — every inning, every swing."

Wood struck out 11, the fourth time this season he reached double digits and the 41st time in 159 career starts. "Mr. Wood was just too tough for us and we couldn't get anything," Expos manager Frank Robinson said. "It's tough against him. We lost a tough one and we can take a lot of pride in the way we played really good baseball. We just came up short."

LaTroy Hawkins (4-4) allowed Endy Chavez's RBI grounder in the home half, but held on for the win in two innings of relief.

In Wednesday's other NL games:

Rockies 4, Giants 1: Jamey Wright pitched seven innings of four-hit ball to snap visiting Colorado's eight-game losing streak. Barry Bonds walked three times and had one official at-bat, when he flied out in the seventh. The slugger stayed at 696 career homers for the third straight day.

Wright (2-2) hadn't won since July 24 at Arizona. Shawn Chacon won his 31st save.

Astros 9, Reds 3: Lance Berkman hit his fourth home run in three games, and Jeff Kent capped a



Chicago Cubs pitcher Kerry Wood struck out 11 in eight shutout innings Wednesday as the Cubs took a one-game lead in the NL wild-card race with a 2-1 victory over the Montreal Expos in Montreal.

five-run seventh with a grand slam to help visiting Houston win its sixth straight.

The Astros have won 14 of 17. In sweeping the three-game series, the Astros hit 10 homers and scored 28 runs.

Roy Oswalt (16-9) improved to 10-0 in 14 games against Cincinnati. He allowed three runs and six hits before leaving after six innings because of sore ribs.

Marlins 5, Mets 4: Paul Lo Duca hit a go-ahead, two-run sin-

gle in the sixth inning. Mike Lowell homered and visiting Florida won its sixth straight.

The Marlins won for the ninth time in 11 games to move seven games over .500 for the first time since June 23. They are three games behind the Cubs in the wild-card race.

Armando Benitez pitched a perfect ninth for his NL-leading 40th save in 43 opportunities. The former Mets closer has 10 saves against New York this season.

Cardinals 4, Padres 2: At St. Louis, Albert Pujols homered for the third straight game and Chris

Carpenter pitched seven innings of six-hit ball to help the Cardinals with their fifth straight and drop San Diego 1½ games back in the wild-card race.

Larry Walker and Scott Rolen homered in the first inning and Reggie Sanders had a pair of doubles for the NL Central leaders, who have won 10 of 12.

Jim Edmonds, who hit seven homers in his previous six games, was 0-for-3 with three strikeouts and a walk.

Diamondbacks 3, Dodgers 1: At Phoenix, Shea Hillenbrand hit a two-run double, and Brandon Webb pitched six strong innings for Arizona.

Greg Aquino got his 10th save in 10 tries for the Diamondbacks, who have the worst record in the major leagues but have won three of five.

Hideo Nomo (3-11), activated from the disabled list before the game, allowed three runs, four hits and struck out seven in six innings. He walked five in his eighth straight loss.

Braves 7, Phillies 2: Andruw Jones and Chipper Jones each hit solo homers, and Jaret Wright pitched six strong innings for visiting Atlanta.

The Braves swept the two-game series and hold an 8½-game lead in the NL East.

Wright (14-6) won his third straight start and improved to 12-1 since May 27.

Pirates 5, Brewers 2 (10): At Milwaukee, Craig Wilson hit a two-out, pinch-hit home run in the ninth and Ty Wigington's two-out infield single drove home the go-ahead run in the 10th. Salomon Torres (7-4) pitched up the win with a perfect ninth.

Jose Mesa earned his 36th save in 41 chances.

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Major League Baseball scoreboard

American League										National League									
East Division					Central Division					West Division					NL East				
Team	W	L	Pct	GB	Team	W	L	Pct	GB	Team	W	L	Pct	GB	Team	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	52	62	.451		Cleveland	47	67	.410		Los Angeles	47	67	.410		Atlanta	47	67	.410	
Baltimore	43	75	.365	9	Minnesota	46	68	.405	1	St. Louis	46	68	.405	1	Pittsburgh	46	68	.405	1
Tampa Bay	45	71	.388	7	Chicago	45	71	.388	7	San Francisco	45	71	.388	7	Philadelphia	45	71	.388	7
Toronto	45	74	.381	27	Detroit	44	72	.381	27	San Diego	44	72	.381	27	Washington	44	72	.381	27
Minnesota	34	78	.306	31	St. Louis	43	73	.368	31	Arizona	43	73	.368	31	Colorado	43	73	.368	31
Cleveland	37	69	.348	24	Chicago	42	74	.361	38	Los Angeles	42	74	.361	38	San Francisco	42	74	.361	38
Chicago	41	70	.365	20	St. Louis	41	75	.350	45	San Diego	41	75	.350	45	Philadelphia	41	75	.350	45
Detroit	41	69	.371	19	Chicago	40	76	.345	52	San Francisco	40	76	.345	52	Washington	40	76	.345	52
Los Angeles	39	73	.345	29	St. Louis	39	77	.338	59	Arizona	39	77	.338	59	Colorado	39	77	.338	59
Tampa Bay	38	74	.339	30	Chicago	38	78	.330	66	Los Angeles	38	78	.330	66	San Francisco	38	78	.330	66
Toronto	35	78	.309	35	St. Louis	35	81	.300	75	San Diego	35	81	.300	75	Philadelphia	35	81	.300	75
West Division					Detroit	34	82	.293	82	San Francisco	34	82	.293	82	Washington	34	82	.293	82
Baltimore	54	59	.478		Minnesota	53	60	.468	1	Los Angeles	53	60	.468	1	Atlanta	53	60	.468	1
Anaheim	47	67	.410	7	Chicago	46	69	.400	8	St. Louis	46	69	.400	8	Pittsburgh	46	69	.400	8
Seattle	51	58	.465	27	Detroit	45	70	.390	15	San Francisco	45	70	.390	15	Philadelphia	45	70	.390	15
Wash. 2nd	44	74	.371	31	St. Louis	44	71	.381	27	Arizona	44	71	.381	27	Colorado	44	71	.381	27
Boston 12	42	74	.361	32	Chicago	43	72	.370	34	Los Angeles	43	72	.370	34	San Francisco	43	72	.370	34
N.Y. Yankees	5	1	.333	33	St. Louis	42	73	.362	41	San Diego	42	73	.362	41	Philadelphia	42	73	.362	41
Baltimore	4	1	.286	34	Chicago	41	74	.353	48	San Francisco	41	74	.353	48	Washington	41	74	.353	48
Minnesota	4	1	.286	35	St. Louis	40	75	.344	55	Arizona	40	75	.344	55	Colorado	40	75	.344	55
Chicago	3	1	.231	36	Chicago	39	76	.337	62	Los Angeles	39	76	.337	62	San Francisco	39	76	.337	62
Seattle	3	1	.231	37	St. Louis	38	77	.329	69	San Diego	38	77	.329	69	Philadelphia	38	77	.329	69
Wash. 2nd	3	1	.231	38	Chicago	37	78	.321	76	San Francisco	37	78	.321	76	Washington	37	78	.321	76
Boston 12	3	1	.231	39	St. Louis	36	79	.313	83	Arizona	36	79	.313	83	Colorado	36	79	.313	83
N.Y. Yankees	3	1	.231	40	Chicago	35	80	.305	90	Los Angeles	35	80	.305	90	San Francisco	35	80	.305	90
Baltimore	3	1	.231	41	St. Louis	34	81	.297	97	San Diego	34	81	.297	97	Philadelphia	34	81	.297	97
Minnesota	3	1	.231	42	Chicago	33	82	.289	104	San Francisco	33	82	.289	104	Washington	33	82	.289	104
Chicago	3	1	.231	43	St. Louis	32	83	.281	111	Arizona	32	83	.281	111	Colorado	32	83	.281	111
Seattle	3	1	.231	44	Chicago	31	84	.273	118	Los Angeles	31	84	.273	118	San Francisco	31	84	.273	118
Wash. 2nd	3	1	.231	45	St. Louis	30	85	.265	125	San Diego	30	85	.265	125	Philadelphia	30	85	.265	125
Boston 12	3	1	.231	46	Chicago	29	86	.257	132	San Francisco	29	86	.257	132	Washington	29	86	.257	132
N.Y. Yankees	3	1	.231	47	St. Louis	28	87	.249	139	Arizona	28	87	.249	139	Colorado	28	87	.249	139
Baltimore	3	1	.231	48	Chicago	27	88	.241	146	Los Angeles	27	88	.241	146	San Francisco	27	88	.241	146
Minnesota	3	1	.231	49	St. Louis	26	89	.233	153	San Diego	26	89	.233	153	Philadelphia	26	89	.233	153
Chicago	3	1	.231	50	Chicago	25	90	.225	160	San Francisco	25	90	.225	160	Washington	25	90	.225	160
Seattle	3	1	.231	51	St. Louis	24	91	.217	167	Arizona	24	91	.217	167	Colorado	24	91	.217	167
Wash. 2nd	3	1	.231	52	Chicago	23	92	.209	174	Los Angeles	23	92	.209	174	San Francisco	23	92	.209	174
Boston 12	3	1	.231	53	St. Louis	22	93	.201	181	San Diego	22	93	.201	181	Philadelphia	22	93	.201	181
N.Y. Yankees	3	1	.231	54	Chicago	21	94	.193	188	San Francisco	21	94	.193	188	Washington	21	94	.193	188
Baltimore	3	1	.231	55	St. Louis	20	95	.185	195	Arizona	20	95	.185	195	Colorado	20	95	.185	195
Minnesota	3	1	.231	56	Chicago	19	96	.177	202	Los Angeles	19	96	.177	202	San Francisco	19	96	.177	202
Chicago	3	1	.231	57	St. Louis	18	97	.169	209	San Diego	18	97	.169	209	Philadelphia	18	97	.169	209
Seattle	3	1	.231	58	Chicago	17	98	.161	216	San Francisco	17	98	.161	216	Washington	17	98	.161	216
Wash. 2nd	3	1	.231	59	St. Louis	16	99	.153	223	Arizona	16	99	.153	223	Colorado	16	99	.153	223
Boston 12	3	1	.231	60	Chicago	15	100	.145	230	Los Angeles	15	100	.145	230	San Francisco	15	100	.145	230
N.Y. Yankees	3	1	.231	61	St. Louis	14	101	.137	237	San Diego	14	101	.137	237	Philadelphia	14	101	.137	237
Baltimore	3	1	.231	62	Chicago	13	102	.129	244	San Francisco	13	102	.129	244	Washington	13	102	.129	244
Minnesota	3	1	.231	63	St. Louis	12	103	.121	251	Arizona	12	103	.121	251	Colorado	12	103	.121	251
Chicago	3	1	.231	64	Chicago	11	104	.113	258	Los Angeles	11	104	.113	258	San Francisco	11	104	.113	258
Seattle	3	1	.231	65	St. Louis	10	105	.105	265	San Diego	10	105	.105	265	Philadelphia	10	105	.105	265
Wash. 2nd	3	1	.231	66	Chicago	9	106	.097	272	San Francisco	9	106	.097	272	Washington	9	106	.097	272
Boston 12	3	1	.231	67	St. Louis	8	107	.089	279	Arizona	8	107	.089	279	Colorado	8	107	.089	279
N.Y. Yankees	3	1	.231	68	Chicago	7	108	.081	286	Los Angeles	7	108	.081	286	San Francisco	7	108	.081	286
Baltimore	3	1	.231	69	St. Louis	6	109	.073	293	San Diego	6	109	.073	293	Philadelphia	6	109	.073	293
Minnesota	3	1	.231	70	Chicago	5	110	.065	300	San Francisco	5	110	.065	300	Washington	5	110	.065	300
Chicago	3	1	.231	71	St. Louis	4	111	.057	307	Arizona	4	111	.057	307	Colorado	4	111	.057	307
Seattle	3	1	.231	72	Chicago	3	112	.049	314	Los Angeles	3	112	.049	314	San Francisco	3	112	.049	314
Wash. 2nd	3	1	.231	73	St. Louis	2	113	.041	321	San Diego	2	113	.041	321	Philadelphia	2	113	.041	321
Boston 12	3	1	.231	74	Chicago	1	114	.033	328	San Francisco	1	114	.033	328	Washington	1	114	.033	328
N.Y. Yankees	3	1	.231	75	St. Louis	0	115	.025	335	Arizona	0	115	.025	335	Colorado	0	115	.025	335
Baltimore	3	1	.231	76	Chicago	0	116	.017	342	Los Angeles	0	116	.017	342	San Francisco	0	116	.017	342
Minnesota	3	1	.231	77	St. Louis	0	117	.009	349	San Diego	0	117	.009	349	Philadelphia	0	117	.009	349
Chicago	3	1	.231	78	Chicago	0	118	.001	356	San Francisco	0	118	.001	356	Washington	0	118	.001	356
Seattle	3	1	.231	79	St. Louis	0	119	.000	363	Arizona	0	119	.000	363	Colorado	0	119	.000	363
Wash. 2nd	3	1	.231	80	Chicago	0	120	.000	370	Los Angeles	0	120	.000	370	San Francisco	0	120	.000	370
Boston 12	3	1	.231	81	St. Louis	0	121	.000	377	San Diego	0	121	.000	377	Philadelphia	0	121	.000	377
N.Y. Yankees	3	1	.231	82	Chicago	0	122	.000	384	San Francisco	0	122	.000	384	Washington	0	122	.000	384
Baltimore	3	1	.231	83	St. Louis	0	123	.000	391	Arizona	0	123	.000	391	Colorado	0	123	.000	391
Minnesota	3	1	.231	84	Chicago	0	124	.000	398	Los Angeles	0	124	.000	398	San Francisco	0	124	.000	398
Chicago	3	1	.231	85	St. Louis	0	125	.000	405	San Diego	0	125	.000	405	Philadelphia	0	125	.000	405
Seattle	3	1	.231	86	Chicago	0	126	.000	412	San Francisco	0	126	.000	412	Washington	0	126	.000	412
Wash. 2nd	3	1	.231	87	St. Louis	0	127	.000	419	Arizona	0	127	.000	419	Colorado	0	127	.000	419
Boston 12	3	1	.231	88	Chicago	0	128	.000	426	Los Angeles	0	128	.000	426	San				

Red Sox keep pressure on Yankees in East

The Associated Press

BOSTON — Johnny Damon and the Boston Red Sox are putting pressure on the New York Yankees and pulling away from everybody else.

Kevin Millar homered and drove in four runs. Damon had four of Boston's 16 hits, and the streaking Red Sox beat the Anaheim Angels 12-7 Wednesday night at Fenway Park for their eighth consecutive victory and 14th in 15 games.

"They're going to be a force in whatever ballpark they're playing in," Angels manager Mike Scioscia said. "Right now they could play in the Grand Canyon and they're going to score runs."

Boston has scored at least 10 runs five times in 12 games. Every starter had a hit by the fifth inning and six players ended the night batting .291 or better.

The Red Sox remained just 3½ games behind the AL East-leading Yankees and opened a 3½-game lead over Anaheim in the wild-card race.

"I think they're the best team we played against all year," Damon said. "For us to go out and play the way we played them, that's very gratifying."

Mark Bellhorn, David Ortiz and Orlando Cabrera drove in two runs apiece for Boston, which goes for a three-game sweep Thursday night.

AL Roundup

"We're very comfortable in this ballpark," manager Terry Francona said after his team's ninth straight win at Fenway. "I'm pleased the way we've come out against good teams."

The Red Sox won even though Bronson Arroyo allowed five runs in 2½ innings, ending a streak of 41 games in which Boston starters went at least five innings.

"These guys kept hammering away," Arroyo said, referring to his teammates. "Everybody else played great, other than me."

Terry Adams (5-4) pitched 2½ scoreless innings for the Sox. Anaheim starter Aaron Sele (8-2) allowed seven runs and 10 hits in 3½ innings. The Angels have lost three of four after winning nine in a row but are only three games behind AL West leader Oakland.

Like Boston, they remain with in striking distance of the top spot.

"I don't think either one of us is looking at the wild card," Sele said. "We both want to win the division. We look at this as another road trip."

The Angels called up 43-year-old first baseman Andres



Boston first baseman Kevin Millar homered and drove in four runs in the Red Sox's 12-7 win over the Anaheim Angels on Wednesday.

Galarraga from Triple-A Salt Lake, but designated hitter Tim Lincecum decided to have season-ending operations on his left knee and left shoulder.

Yankees 5, Indians 3: At New York, Orlando Hernandez allowed three hits in seven innings, and Jorge Posada hit a two-run homer.

Coming off their most lopsided loss ever in a 22-0 rout Tuesday night, the Yankees rallied when Posada homered against C.C. Sa-

bathia (10-9) in the fourth. John Olerud added a solo shot later in the inning, and Miguel Cairo hit another in the seventh off David Riske.

Hernandez (6-0) was just the second New York starter to win in 17 games since Aug. 13. He struck out seven and didn't allow a runner past second base after the first inning. Mariano Rivera got four outs for his major league-leading 46th save in 49 chances.

Twins 4, Rangers 2: Terry Lincecum hit a go-ahead, two-run double in his major league debut to cap an eighth-inning rally and help Minnesota beat visiting Texas its third straight loss.

Francisco Cordero (3-1) took the loss. He had converted 21 straight save opportunities. The Rangers dropped five games behind Boston in the wild-card race.

Shannon Stewart homered for Minnesota, which extended its lead over Cleveland in the AL Central to eight games. Jesse Crain (1-0) pitched two perfect innings for his first major league win. Joe Nathan earned his 36th save in 39 chances.

White Sox 5, Athletics 4: At Chicago, pinch-hitter Ross Gload came through with an RBI single in the ninth, ending Oakland's eight-game winning streak.

Barry Zito and the Athletics'

bullpen failed to hold a 4-1 lead in the seventh.

Orioles 8, Devil Rays 0: Javy Lopez drove in four runs, Daniel Cabrera (10-7) became the first rookie to win 10 games this year and Tampa Bay managed only two hits in its fifth straight loss.

The visiting Orioles have won three straight following a 12-game losing streak. Mark Hendrickson (8-14) lost his sixth consecutive start.

Rocco Baldelli returned from the disabled list for the Devil Rays.

Blue Jays 4, Mariners 2: At Toronto, Frank Menchichio hit a tiebreaking homer off Ron Villone (5-5) in the seventh, and David Bush (3-3) pitched seven strong innings to help Seattle snap a season-high, five-game winning streak.

Mariners star Ichiro Suzuki went 2-for-3, giving him 214 hits. He has 30 games left to break George Sisler's major league record of 257 hits set in 1920 with the St. Louis Browns. Bret Boone hit a two-run homer for Seattle.

Royals 1, Tigers 0: Rookie Zack Greinke (7-9) retired his first 15 batters and allowed three hits in seven innings for home-standing Kansas City. Abraham Nunez hit an RBI single off Mike Maroth (10-10) for the only run. Jeremy Affeldt got his ninth save.

Stars and Stripes

Messages of Support

★ Thank you so much for not even questioning your job to defend our country. To put your lives on the line for those whom you know and those you do not know. You are all truly Gods angels here on earth. Thank you for fighting for hope and my families freedom and safety. We mine and pray for you to have a safe return home soon. Our prayers are with you all. With deepest thanks. The Brooks Crysler Family

★ Travis if you get this, I'm a friend of your mother I work with her at SPW and she wanted me to send you an e-mail. She says she loves you and misses you. Schmitt and Ben say hi too. Our thoughts and prayers are with you. Darby Jo

★ Dear Troops, I hope you win the war in IRAQ! Hope you come back safely. We all miss you so much. We are very proud of you. You're making the world a better place. Everyone's childrens safe and sound. Fort Sam Houston School Age Services

★ We love you and miss you all! We can't wait for you to come home! Call or write when you can. We support you and are very proud of you! Love, Kelly, Heather, Ivy and Jennifer

★ To whom this letter finds its way to, I am an American who you are fighting for in Iraq. I am one of the nameless people you probably won't ever meet. I want to thank you and all the other service men and women leaving their families, friends, and the comforts of their home to defend our freedom and the people of Iraq. I know you wouldn't consider yourself a hero, but know this you are! You are making millions of people back home proud once again to be an American!! My prayers and best wishes are being sent your way for a safe return to your loved ones! Be safe and come home!!! Sincerely, Jennifer Millbrae, CA

★ Dearest Daughter, Thinking of you... Sending prayers, emails, care packages & our love to you. Hopes for peace from many of your family & friends. Lighting candles for you all... We miss you! Hope you are safe & home soon. Be careful & brave - Love, Mom, Dad, Emily, Jenny Allgood, Eugene, OR.

★ Shawn F.L., So proud of you! You and all soldiers are heroes to us and to the Iraqi people, although they may not realize it yet. Know that what you do is right and just. Keep focused, keep safe, keep faith. Cousins Cindy, Carl, Janina.

★ Our thoughts and prayers are with you at every moment. Your courage and devotion to our country and the overall peace of the world is incredible. God Bless each of you and may you all return home safely soon.

★ Your commitment, your sacrifice, your efforts will never go unappreciated and never be forgotten. There are plenty of Americans who admire you, support you and will give everything we've got to give you the tools to win. Go get 'em! Fight hard. Give 'em hell. Make us proud.

★ Dear American Soldier, Just a note from a Mom/Grandmother in St. Charles, Missouri to say we're proud of you and believe in the job you're doing for our country, whether you're in Kosovo, Iraq, Germany, or some other place. We are proud of our country and proud of the thousands of servicemen & women who make up our military. We realize we have it easy here in the USA in spite of the problems with our economy & our ongoing fears of terrorism. We want you to know you're in our daily prayers and thoughts and hope you get to come home soon. God bless you and may God also continue to bless America! Cheryl Smith

★ Dear Soldiers, I would like to thank you for the tremendous sacrifice you are making for the American people and for the Iraqi people. We support everything you are doing and we pray that you come home safely. It is heroes like you that make this the greatest country in the world! Thanks again, Kathy DiGirolamo, CA

RACING STRIPES

A WEEKLY LOOK AT MOTORSPORTS

Kenseth making his point

Despite scoring changes, Kenseth still in hunt for Cup title

BY JENNA FRYER
The Associated Press

Matt Kenseth used consistency to win his first NASCAR championship. His strategy was so boring, the sanctioning body changed the rules to prevent a repeat.

Kenseth, though, didn't change his style.

Now, in the ultimate revenge, Kenseth sits smack in the middle of the current points standings and well within striking distance of a second Nextel Cup title.

"That would be cool," Kenseth said. "That's what our goal has been all year... to come back and try to win the championship under this new format."

The race for the title lacked drama last year as Kenseth, using a cautious and steady style, had a series-high 25 top-10 finishes in 36 races. Although he won only one race, he practically locked up the title in July.

Sure, other drivers were mathematically within reach of Kenseth, but with only two DNF's all season and a knack for finishing somewhere around fifth place every week, he basically ran away with the title.

Because the stretch run of the season meant very little in terms of crowning a champion, NASCAR radically overhauled the points system it had used since 1975.

Under the new formula, Kenseth will take the top 10 drivers and reset their point totals after 26 races. The eligible drivers will be separated from first



Matt Kenseth won his first Cup championship with one victory and few DNF's. NASCAR changed its scoring to create a potentially exciting playoff chase, but Kenseth's consistency has him right in the thick of it again.

through 10th in five-point increments and compete for the title in a 10-race playoff format.

NASCAR denied Kenseth's boring title run was the reason for the change. He believes otherwise.

"NASCAR said they didn't change it because of us, but they did," he said. "It's more of a compliment than anything. We did that good and the team did such a

good job of being consistent and not dropping out.

"We just didn't make a lot of mistakes last year, and it's hard to do it all season long."

With two races to go before the field is reset, Kenseth is in fifth place in the standings. If the playoffs began tomorrow, he'd be 20 points behind leader Jeff Gordon.

No one is sure what the correct strategy will be to win a title

under the new format. Some drivers will be aggressive, going all out to try to win all 10 races. Others will just try to stay out of trouble, fearful that one accident, one broken part, will instantly ruin their chance at a title.

"I think the guy who wins this is going to be the guy who can run fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh every week and doesn't have any DNF's," Kenseth said. "I

don't think it's going to be the guy who wins two or three races and drops out of two or three races."

"It's still going to be the guy who is most consistent."

It's not exactly what NASCAR had in mind when it overhauled the system.

Then again, it's not exactly the way Kenseth wants to win titles, either.

He prefers the old system, when the points leader is hunted by the other 42 teams in the garage. Being mentally strong and able to hold off the challenge week in and week out was an important part of earning a title.

"I'm a traditionalist, I liked the points the way they were before," he said. "It used to be you had pressure all year from Daytona to Atlanta. Now there is pressure to get into the top 10. Then, it's only the top 10 who have the pressure."

Still, it's hard to believe Kenseth and his No. 17 team didn't start the season feeling just a little heat to turn things up a notch. After winning just one race all of last season, they opened this year by winning two of the first three events.

Kenseth later added a victory in the annual All-Star race.

But it's been a series of top 10 finishes since then, and Kenseth wants to ride them right into the playoffs.

"No matter what, you don't want to go into the last few races without any momentum," Kenseth said. "So more than thinking about making the top 10 these last two races, we're thinking about running good and trying to get to Victory Lane and carry some momentum into the last 10."

NASCAR NEXTEL CUP

Race 25: Pop Secret 500, 1 a.m. Monday (live), AFN-A.

Last race: Dale Earnhardt Jr. completed the weekend sweep at Bristol Motor Speedway by winning the Sharpie 500. Almost completely healed from burns he

suffered last month in a non-NASCAR wreck, Earnhardt led 295 of the 500 laps for his first Nextel Cup win at the track.

Last year: Inaugural race.

DRIVERS TO WATCH



Jeff Gordon is building a lead in the Nextel Cup standings, but he's looking for a boost in his quest for a second title. The fifth Cup title, has three career victories at California Speedway.



Ryan Newman has been hurt by his inconsistency in the Chase for the Cup. He needs to finish in the top 10 in points to have a chance for two more races to qualify for the Chase for the Championship.



Casey Mears is still mathematically alive in the title chase, but he really needs to make a move at California. The fifth Cup title, has three career victories at California Speedway.



Nexel Cup qualifying record
Ryan Newman, 187.432 mph, 2002

Nexel Cup race record
Jeff Gordon, 150.012, June 22, 1997

FAST FACTS

Ryan Newman finished second at Bristol and jumped three spots to fifth in the standings. The current points leader is eligible for NASCAR's 10-race championship Chase. Jeff Gordon won the Auto Club 500 at Fontana on May 2. Jimmie Johnson ended a streak of three straight DNF's with a third-place showing at Bristol. Rusty Wallace announced on Monday that he will retire after the 2005 season.

POINTS RACE

After 24 of 36 races

1. Jeff Gordon	3,380
2. Jimmie Johnson	3,356
3. Dale Earnhardt Jr.	3,305
4. Tony Stewart	3,195
5. Matt Kenseth	3,156
6. Kurt Busch	3,051
7. Elliott Sader	3,019
8. Kevin Harvick	2,923
9. Bobby Labonte	2,919
10. Ryan Newman	2,918
11. Casey Mears	2,892
12. Mark Martin	2,868
13. Jeremy Mayfield	2,863
14. Dale Jarrett	2,873
15. Jamie McMurray	2,873
16. Casey Mears	2,828
17. Michael Waltrip	2,725
18. Greg Biffle	2,552
19. Sterling Marlin	2,546
20. Jeff Burton	2,529

BUSCH SERIES

This week: Target House 300 at Fontana, Calif. (Tape-delayed, 1 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 5).

Last race: Dale Earnhardt Jr. beat Matt Kenseth in the first green-white flag race in series history to win the Food City 250 at Bristol Motor Speedway. Earnhardt started from the pole and led a race-high 125 laps, but a series-high 13 cautions extended the event by six laps.

Last year: Inaugural race.

Next race: Emerson 250, Sept. 10, Richmond, Va.

Fast facts: Earnhardt has two wins in four Busch starts this season. Greg Biffle won the Stater Bros. 300 at California Speedway on May 1. The series has never competed in the state of California twice in one season. No polester has won at California Speedway.

CHAMP CARS

Last race: Bruno Junqueira jumped back into championship contention with his win at the Molson Montreal Indy. Junqueira recorded his first win since last August and cut Sebastian Bourdais' lead in the standings to 34 points with four races remaining.

Next race: Sept. 12, Laguna Seca, Calif.

INDY RACING

Last race: Dan Wheldon captured the Firestone Indy 225 at Nazareth Speedway, extending Honda's winning streak to 17 races. Andretti Green Racing drivers swept the top three spots, a first by any team in IR. history.

Next race: Delphi Indy 300, Sept. 12, Joliet, Ill.

RAFTSMAN TRUCK

Last race: Carl Edwards came from the back of the field and edged Shane Hmiel to win the O'Reilly 200 at Bristol Motor Speedway. Edwards qualified any team in IR. history.

Next race: Craftsman Truck Series 200, Sept. 8, Richmond, Va.

FORMULA ONE

Last race: Michael Schumacher has his seventh F1 championship at the Belgian Grand Prix on despite not winning for just the second time in 14 races this season. Schumacher finished second behind Kimi Raikkonen, but still earned his fifth straight drivers' title.

Next race: Italian Grand Prix, Sept. 12, Monza.

Rallies earn Ramstein, Spangdahlem USAF titles

By KENT HARRIS

Stars and Stripes

AVIANO AIR BASE, Italy — Chalk a few more wins up experience.

The women's team from Ramstein and the men's team from Spangdahlem captured U.S. Air Forces in Europe softball titles Thursday by being patient and waiting for their opportunities.

Ramstein downed Lakenheath 9-5 by scoring the final four runs of the game. A few hours later, Spangdahlem outlasted Aviano 21-19 by tallying 14 runs in the final two innings.

"We got off to a slow start," said Spangdahlem coach Chris Heffner, whose team bounced back to win the championship this year after failing to Ramstein in the finals last year. "I didn't doubt it. I was just waiting for it to come."

Women

Ramstein 9, Lakenheath 5

The Ramstein women were the second straight title after losing in the finals in extra innings two years ago.

"I like winning a lot more than losing," said pitcher Mary Schmidt, who has been on all three teams. Only four other members of the team returned from last year's champions.

Lakenheath looked strong early and managed to keep most of the seemingly endless stream of Ramstein base runners from crossing the plate.

Dawn McKain's run-scoring single tied the game at 5 in the fifth, but she was out



KENT HARRIS/Stars and Stripes

Lakenheath's Kathy Trim drills a base hit during Thursday's championship game of the U.S. Air Forces in Europe women's softball tournament. Ramstein won the game, 9-5.

trying to stretch it into a double — the second Lakenheath player thrown out on the bases in the inning.

Ramstein, which tallied 17 hits, took the lead for good in the bottom half when Amy Longoria drew a bases-loaded walk and Schmidt followed with a sacrifice fly. Run-scoring singles from Amy Spurling

and Billie Baber added a cushion in the sixth.

Ramstein coach Keith Baber said his team lost a lot of power from last year's team when members transferred from the base. So it had to compensate with defense and a different kind of offense.

"It's kind of like little ball," he said.

Men

Spangdahlem 21, Aviano 19

"Little ball" was important in the men's game, too.

Teams are allowed only nine home runs each before balls hit over the fences count as outs, so it's important for runners to get on base before a teammate clears the fence.

Aviano, playing in the final for the first time in a decade, worked that to perfection early. A pair of two-run home runs by Armando Huerta and one each from Jason Mathias and Chris Lanotti helped the Dragons take a 12-7 lead in the top of the fifth.

But Spangdahlem batted around in the bottom of the inning, with nine of the 11 batters in the lineup getting a hit and seven of them scoring. The big blow was Clifford Gonzalez's three-run home run.

After Aviano surged ahead again with five runs in the sixth, Spangdahlem scored seven runs in the bottom of the inning to put it away.

Lloyd Oxford had his second two-run single of the game in the inning, and Bo Brewer hit a two-run homer.

All four teams will take the field again this weekend when Aviano hosts the Army-Air Force final four tournament.

Men's teams from Stuttgart and SHAPE and women's squads from Kaiserslautern and Heidelberg join the fun with games starting at 10 a.m. Saturday.

The women's championship game is set for 1 p.m. Sunday, followed by the men's contest.

E-mail Kent Harris at: harris@mail.strips.mil

Stars and Stripes

Messages of Support

I support you 100%. Without soldiers (individuals) like you the world would be a bad place to live. Thank you for everything you have done and will continue to do for us. God Bless you and may you have a safe return home. Barbara (Houston)

To SPC Michael C. Every one at home is behind you and all who are fighting for the freedom of the Iraqi people 100%. We pray for your safe return every day. love ya, DAD

Hi Troops, Please continue to stay alert and be careful. I am very proud of all of you. God Bless all our Troops and God Bless America. You are all heroes. Come home safely to your families. You have so much support. Please know that. Joyce in Virginia

Thanks to all our men in the military!! With out you we can't be free thanks so much we love you!! Renee R.

I am sending a message of support to my son Sgt. Eric E. R., delta co. 1st bat. Thinking of you and hoping that you are safe. Love from Mom - Love from Chris and Connor

We just want to express our gratitude to all of you men and women in uniform that are out there sacrificing your time energy and potentially your lives. You make me and my family proud! Sincerely, Jeff, Staci and Ryan (14mos old) D.

To my beautiful son, James R. G., I pray you and your men are successful in all your endeavors and that you stay safe and return home soon. I think about you every second of the day, and I love you more than words can say. Love, Mom

To the Brave Soldiers In Iraq. It's amazing how much you fight for their freedom. They really deserve it, but you can do it with such passion and courage that it's just incredible. It's so great to see you guys out there doing what your doing and I feel honored to live in this country. Be Strong

Dear Servicemen or women, We are so very proud of you and what you are doing in the name of freedom. Please know the American people are so thankful for courageous, selfless servants like you all. There are a few that want to protest, though they can't explain why. Do not let this get to you. They are FEW!!!! There are many that pray for you, President Bush and your families here at home. Thank you with all our hearts...The Gilbert Family

To all: Thank-you for your courage and dedication in this conflict. You are all in our thoughts and prayers each day. Be safe. Come home soon. God Bless from Amityville, New York.

To all of our brave soldiers, I just wanted to say that without all of you, USA citizens such as myself wouldn't have all of our freedoms that so many times we take for granted. My heart goes out to you and your families during this trying time. BE SAFE!!!

We have you all over the place and now after 9/11 our world will never be the same. I am writing to give you a pep rally because you deserve it. We love our freedom and our country. That is why you are where you are and that is why I am writing to you. To "Thank You." Never again will our service people not be appreciated for all you are doing. Right here in the USA and abroad we value your sacrifice. The young are being taught that freedom is not free and they will grow up with stronger country values and never take all we have for granted again. We want to protect our freedoms and our military personnel are the only way we can do it.

This goes out to my fiancée Sgt. J. Sanchez: I love and miss you so much and will be so really proud of you. I can't wait for you to come back home. You're my hero, my everything. Love you forever, yours Piac-

SPORTS



Red Sox pull away in AL East, put pressure on Yankees, Page 29

Bryant sex assault case dropped

Civil lawsuit still pending; Laker issues apology

BY STEVEN K. PAULSON
The Associated Press

EAGLE, Colo. — The sexual assault charge against Kobe Bryant has been dropped, but his accuser — whose reluctance to participate derailed the criminal trial before it ever really got started — isn't letting the NBA star off the hook just yet.

With jury selection under way, the criminal case was dropped late Wednesday by prosecutors who said the 20-year-old woman accusing Bryant of rape had decid-



Bryant

ed not to participate. Her exit followed gaffes that led to the public disclosure of her name and other personal details, and prosecutors said they would not carry on without her testimony.

But the Los Angeles Lakers star still faces her federal civil lawsuit seeking unspecified damages. That case is still on, said L. Lin Wood, the woman's attorney.

"There has been no settlement of the civil lawsuit, and there have been no discussions concerning a settlement," he said. The 26-year-old Los Angeles Lakers guard issued a written apology that stopped short of taking responsibility for his actions.

"Although I truly believe this encounter

between us was consensual, I recognize now that she did not and does not view this incident the same way I did," he said.

In court, one of the woman's lawyers, John Clune, said Bryant's apology factored into her decision to drop out of the case. Defense attorneys Pamela Mackey and Hal Haddon said the accuser "insisted on that statement as a price of freedom," according to a story posted on the ESPN network Web site Thursday.

Bryant tearfully admitted more than a year ago he had consensual sex with the then-19-year-old employee of a Vail-area resort where he stayed last summer. If convicted, the married father of a little girl could have faced four years to life in prison, or 20 years to life on probation, and a fine up to \$750,000.

Instead, prosecutors dropped the case after spending at least \$200,000 preparing for trial. District Attorney Mark Hurlbert said he could have won the case, but he sup-

ported the woman's decision to withdraw, with a stipulation that charges will never be refilled.

"Today justice is sadly interrupted. The casualty in this interruption has been a brave young woman who was grievously hurt," Hurlbert said.

Victims' rights groups said the way the case disintegrated could force states to take another look at rape-shield laws, which typically bar the sex of an alleged assault victim from being admitted as evidence.

Wendy Murphy, a professor at the New England School of Law in Boston and a former prosecutor, said the case could shake many women's faith in the justice system.

"The rules, the laws, the things that are supposed to make us treat each other with civility are a big joke, it doesn't matter," she said.

SEE CASE ON PAGE 25

Top seed survives scare in U.S. Open

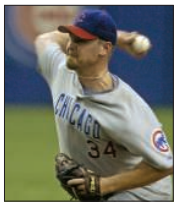
Top seeded-Justine Henin-Hardenne, of Belgium, returns a shot against Tzipora Obzlier of Israel at the U.S. Open tennis tournament in New York Thursday. Henin-Hardenne won 6-2, 5-7, 6-2. Other winners Thursday included Lindsay Davenport, Paradorn Srichaphan and Nicolas Pietrangeli. See story on Page 26.

AP



New format can't keep Kenseth out of contention

Page 30



Wood shuts down Expos in Cubs' 2-1 win

Page 27